

Limerick Reformed Fellowship
Rev. Martyn McGeown, missionary
38 Abbeyvale, Corbally Co. Limerick, Ireland
<http://www.limerickreformed.com/>
martynmcgeown@gmail.com

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Dear saints in the
Protestant Reformed Churches,

In my last newsletter (July 15) I reported on the CPRC Council's decision (March 9) to withdraw me, the missionary, from the Limerick Reformed Fellowship, and my acceptance of the call to Providence PRC (April 4). I also mentioned how the COVID-19 restrictions have affected our activities, and I gave some indication of how long immigration might take before Larisa and I will be permitted to travel to the USA.

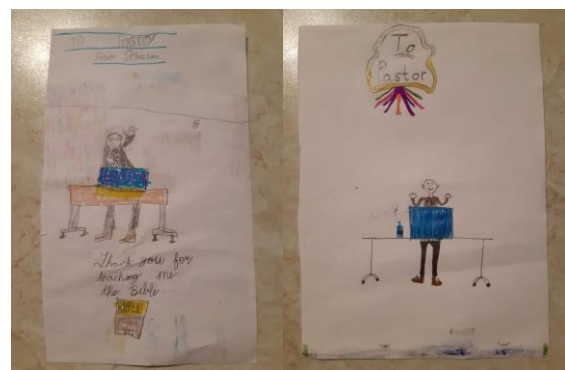
Larisa, being a US citizen, was actually able to travel to the USA to attend her youngest brother's wedding. Ben and Taylor (Griess) married on August 7 in Loveland, Colorado. Initially, Ben and Taylor had asked me to officiate their wedding, which I would have been honoured to do. Sadly, immigration issues made that impossible, so Larisa travelled to the USA alone. I was glad that she could go—she had missed two family funerals already in 2020—even though I had to stay at home without her. Her visit to the USA also gave her the opportunity to visit Providence PRC, meet the people of our future congregation, attend social events with friends, family, and future congregants, and see the parsonage that the saints in Providence PRC are preparing for us. Of course, travelling during the pandemic was not easy with mask wearing on the flight and self-isolation in Michigan and Limerick, but, thankfully, she and her family remained COVID-19 free.

The Fellowship is slowly—and painfully—disbanding. Of the three main families, the Wattersons, Kuhs, and Mansonas, only one remains. The Wattersons moved to Northern Ireland in March, as I reported last

time, and are now members in the CPRC in Ballymena. The Kuhs plan to move to Northern Ireland next week, DV. October 4



was their last Sunday worshipping in the Fellowship. They will be greatly missed. Now there are only a handful of souls left. Yesterday (October 7) was also my last day teaching the Kuhs children—Sebastian and Penelope—catechism. As “thank you” gifts the children made cards depicting me as their pastor/catechism teacher: as you can



see, they are very artistic. Their new pastor/catechism teacher will be Rev. Stewart. He is getting some very good students, who by God's grace have grown greatly in the knowledge of God's Word.

The Irish government recently adopted a “Resilience and Recovery 2020-

2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19,” which outlines a five-level approach to the disease. Yesterday, the whole country entered “Level 3.” Under Level 3 we are advised to have no more than six people to our home from one other household, which makes our Bible study difficult (we usually have two visitors to our Bible study, but they are from *two* other households); worship services must move to online only, so that the Conradh na Gaelige is again closed to us (we will most likely be back to “bubble church” on Sunday, although we could have up to six people from one household join us); and we are only allowed to leave our county for essential purposes. *An Garda Síochána* (the Irish police) have checkpoints on all major roads to check that people are complying with the “no non-essential journeys” rule. Although, for now, they have no powers of enforcement (they can only *advise against* unnecessary journeys), the government is considering introducing fines for crossing county borders. There are 26 counties in Ireland and to travel from Limerick to Dublin, we must travel through five counties: Tipperary, Laois, Offaly, Kildare, and Dublin. To travel to Northern Ireland would require travelling through two additional counties, Meath and Louth, with potential checkpoints and questions at every border. Media speculation is that on October 27 when the Level 3 restrictions expire, Level 4 or even Level 5 restrictions could be introduced.

That brings me to immigration news. On August 24, the immigration lawyer whom we hired for the R-1 religious worker visa informed us of USCIS *approval*, which is very good news. However, the next step is an interview in the US Consulate. Initially, I was told to book an interview in London, which I tried to do: the next available appointment is *August 13, 2021!* Then I tried the US Consulate in Dublin, and I have an appointment scheduled for *November 6, 2020!* You can imagine the rollercoaster of emotions of late August, as joy gave way to disappointment, which gave way to relief.

Everything, therefore, depends on a successful outcome in November, which is just four weeks away. Pray, first, that the US Consulate remains *open* during the COVID-19 restrictions; and second, that the Lord, in whose hands are the hearts of kings, moves the immigration officials to approve our petition. I can assure that I will be telling every police officer between here and Dublin that my journey to Dublin is *absolutely essential!* (Incidentally, the R-1 visa, if successful, would permit me to work as a religious worker for a maximum of five years. The other petition, immigration based on marriage to a US citizen, is a separate issue: there is no progress on that petition).

While my catechism instruction of the children of the Limerick Reformed Fellowship has ended, I have begun to teach two classes online for Providence PRC. Because of the time difference I teach only the Beginners and Juniors classes (finishing at 10 P.M. on Mondays for me). I am enjoying very much getting to know the first through fifth graders as we study New Testament History together, and I look forward, DV, to meeting the rest of the catechumens and the other members of Providence PRC in due course.

In Christian love,
Rev. Martyn and Larisa McGeown