
Annual Report

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To: Roger Collins <clerk@msvalley.org>

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Roger,

I apologise for my failure to send in a report to the August meeting. My computer completely crashed in May and I did not have a computer for a couple months this summer. My report follows:

Fathers and Brothers,

Thank you for your continued support of our ministry through prayer, finances and accountability. The last year has been an eventful year in our lives and ministry here in Hexham, England. We've lived in the UK for about 1 year and 9 months now.

As I reported last year, when we moved to England we began leading a Friday night Bible study. Initially the study met monthly. Then, we increased the frequency to fortnightly. After my last report we moved the study to a weekly study last September. During this time without a church in Hexham we were worshipping with Gateshead Presbyterian Church (GPC). GPC is not only the nearest reformed church, but the nearest evangelical church, 45 minutes from us. It is a fairly new church plant itself, pastored by Rev. Dr. Bill Schweitzer, a PCA TE and MTW missionary, also. Bill was back in the states for furlough during this time, so in addition to leading the Bible study in our home on a weekly basis I was taking a lead in the pastoral responsibilities at GPC through September.

In February of this year, after six months of meeting as a weekly Bible study, GPC sent us out as a mission church of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of England and Wales (EPCEW). There was already one family attending GPC from the Hexham area before the Bible study began, but over the last year several more from the Bible study had begun attending. On our first Sunday we had a shared service in Gateshead followed by a potluck lunch and then had an evening service in Hexham. From 8 February we began morning and evening services each week in Hexham, as well as a mid-week prayer meeting. We began with 15 members and we've seen an average of about 22 attending in the morning and 19 of an evening.

I was able to visit both the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland (RPCI) Synod and Associate Presbyterian Church (APC) General Assembly as the EPCEW delegate this previous summer. Both were a great blessing and encouragement. The APC is a small Scottish denomination of about 12 churches. They are currently in talks with the Free Church of Scotland about the potential of joining them. The RPCI is a denomination of 4 presbyteries and about 60 churches, which is large by UK Presbyterian standards. The RPCI was an extremely warm and encouraging group of men to be around. I had two meals with Ted Donnely who warmly remembers several visits to churches in the Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley and RTS. The Synod was moderated by his son-in-law, who now pastors Trinity Church where Ted formerly pastored. Lord willing I will be attending the next presbytery meeting of the International Presbyterian Church (IPC) in the UK. I will also be attending MTW's European Leadership Team meeting in Prague, also in November.

Since last year's report our family has grown by one, also. Rutherford Davis Rieger was born in November 2014. Despite being nearly a year old, he has yet to see his country of citizenship. Gina, Jackson (5), and Riley Cates (3) are all members of First Presbyterian Church of Jackson and both of our other children were baptised there. But Rutherford was baptised here, at GPC.

Please be in prayer for Northumberland, and the North of England. Northumberland, though the 4th largest county in England, only has 2 evangelical church, Hexham Presbyterian Church being one of them. It is a traditional and conservative area, so there are many churches, but they are effectively social clubs with no gospel preaching. They have inoculated people to their need for the gospel. One of the local Church of England vicars is a man who has had a sex change operation. He still lives with his wife and his operation was paid for

by the diocese. Although there are evangelical lights in some places in the state church, this is not one of them. There really hasn't been an evangelical witness in Northumberland for decades, much less a reformed witness, and it is very hard ground to till. As a congregation we are seeking to reach out to the area in every way possible, but it is slow going. Many of our members had been driving as much as an hour and a half to church prior to HPC being planted. It is only the prayers of the Church and the power of the Spirit that have any hope of seeing a vibrant, growing, gospel preaching, Presbyterian church in this area. Pray that God would prepare hearts for the work of the gospel

In Christ,

Josh Rieger

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