

ST. IGNATIUS ELIAS JACOBITE SYRIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

BELFAST, NORTHERN IRELAND, UNITED KINGDOM

[MALANKARA SYRIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH – U.K. REGION]

(Under the Holy Apostolic See of Antioch & All the East)

Charity Registration Number: NIC100633

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2023-2024

Administrative Information

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

VICAR & PRESIDENT

Rev. Fr. Abin Mathew

SECRETARY

Mr. Daniel Kavalayil

TREASURER

Mr. Gibi Andrews

Jt. SECRETARY

Mr. Joby Mathew

Jt. TREASURER

Mr. Bennet V Mathew

MANAGING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Mr. Biju Kuriakose

Dn. Biju Paul Puthukunnel

Mr. Eldho K Ouseph

Mr. Nelson Peter

Mr. Niju Baby

Mr. Paulose N Kuriakose

Mr. Rajan K Markose

Mr. Regi M George

Mr. Saji George

Mr. Shibu Abraham

INTERNAL AUDITOR

Mrs. Sholy Paul

WORSHIP PLACE

St. Polycarp's Church Hall

104 Upper Lisburn Road, Finaghy

Belfast BT10 0BB

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Trustees Report

The Trustees present their report and accounts for the period from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024.

Reference and administrative details of the Church, its Trustees and advisers during this period are shown on page 1.

Structure, objects, Governance and Management

This church is a part of the Universal Syrian Orthodox Church. The supreme head of this Church is His Holiness Moran Mar Ignatius Aphrem II, the Patriarch of Antioch and all the East and his Successors. The Patriarch may appoint a Metropolitan (The Patriarchal Vicar) from Malankara Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church as the Metropolitan in charge of the Church. This Church is a registered charity under Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.

Objects. To maintain the faith, traditions and doctrines of the Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church and to perform all religious rights and sacraments for all in Northern Ireland in accordance with the ancient Syrian Orthodox traditions, as followed by the Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church in India.

The church conducts holy Eucharist, sacraments and services according to the faith, traditions, customs and rights of the Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church, organises and conducts Sunday school, prayer meetings, retreats and activities of community development for youth.

The church generates funds through charity fund raising events, members' contributions and donations. This is used to provide financial assistance to sick people who require hospitalisation and medical treatment and financial assistance to those who can't afford education.

The Charity is organised, the General Body Meeting elects the Trustees. During the period there were one annual General Body Meeting, one half yearly General Body Meeting and three special General Body Meetings held. The Trustees manage the administrative as well as the financial affairs of the Church. The Trustees meet regularly for monitoring the activities. During this period, Trustees met eighteen times to review, monitor and plan activities.

Activities

1. The Holy Services are usually conducted every Saturdays of the month. Holy services are conducted by the vicar or any other priest deputed by the vicar. Many altar assistants are helping the priests in conducting the Holy services. Refreshments are provided to all after the Holy services.
2. Holy week services were conducted from 1st April 2023 to 8th April 2023. Fr Paulson Keerikkattil led the holy week services.
3. Vacation Bible School was conducted on 10th, 11th and 15th April 2023 at Dunmurry Community Centre. Many non-members also attended.
4. Feast of St. George was celebrated on 22nd April 2023.
5. Annual General Body Meeting was held on 29th April 2023 and elected the board of trustees listed in page 1.
6. The church has participated the King Charles Coronation celebrations conducted by Derriagh Local Community on 8th May 2023 and provided lunch for all participants.

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7. Feast of Pentecost was celebrated on 27th May 2023.
8. Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul was celebrated on 1st July 2023.
9. One day picnic was conducted to Tollymore Forest Park at Newcastle on 2nd July 2023. Many parish members participated in the picnic.
10. Feast of St. Thomas was celebrated on 8th July 2023.
11. Feast of St. Mary was celebrated on 12th August 2023.
12. Onam (Festival of Kerala, India) along with the annual harvest festival was celebrated on 26th August 2023. Many games and cultural programmes were conducted. Onasadya (traditional special dinner) was served to all participants.
13. A pilgrimage trip was conducted to Knock church in Ireland on 2nd September 2023. Around 150 members participated.
14. The Patriarchal Vicar Issac Mor Osthathos Metropolitan visited our parish and celebrated Holy Mas on 16th September 2023.
15. Eight members from the church participated in the Diocesan family conference held at Stoke-on-Trent on 30th September and 1st October 2023.
16. Feast of St. Baselios was celebrated on 7th October 2023.
17. Half yearly General Body Meeting was held on 21st October 2023.
18. Parish annual day was conducted on 28th October 2023. Cultural competitions for Sunday school children, games and cultural programs for adults were conducted on the day. Lunch and dinner were provided to all.
19. Feast of St. Gregorios was celebrated on 4th November 2023. Scotland – Northern Ireland zonal seminar of Martha Mariam Vanitha Samajam was conducted after the holy mass. Diocesan office bearers and members from Londonderry parish also attended the seminar.
20. To commemorate the birth of Lord Jesus Christ, Christmas Carol was conducted on 6 days during December 2023 under the leadership of the Vicar and Assistant Vicar. The Carol Team visited all houses and distributed church calendar and sweets.
21. Christmas Service was conducted on 24th December 2023. The Holy Mass was celebrated by Rev. Fr. Aju Varghese. Special cake and Christmas Dinner were provided to all.
22. The church carol team participated in the Diocesan level carol singing competition.
23. Feast of Baptism of Jesus was celebrated on 6th January 2024. A Cake Fest was conducted after the holy mass.

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24. A Food Fest was conducted on 20th January 2024 after the holy mass to raise funds for new church building.
25. Feast of the Patron Saint, St. Ignatius Elias III was celebrated on 2nd and 3rd February 2024 at St. Polycarp's Church, Finaghy, Belfast. On 2nd, Evening Prayer, Gospel Preaching & Love Feast were conducted. On 3rd, Holy Tri-Mass was celebrated by Rev. Fr. George Parekkattil, Rev. Fr. Abin Mathew and Rev. Fr. Aju Varghese. After the Holy Mass, Procession, Dinner and Cultural Programs were conducted. Prizes were distributed to all winning students for academic excellence, attendance and cultural programs. On this occasion, those who have completed 60 years of age and those couples who have completed 25 years of their marriage were specially honoured and mementos were presented to them.
26. Service of reconciliation was conducted on 10th February 2024.
27. A vaping awareness class for Sunday school students was conducted by Cancer Focus, Belfast on 24th February 2024.
28. A retreat for Sunday school students was conducted in English on 9th March 2024. A retreat for all parish members was conducted on 23rd March 2024.
29. Holy week services were conducted from 23rd March to 30th March 2024. Fr Aju Varghese led the holy week services.
30. Balakalolsavam (Cultural competition for children) was conducted during March 2024.
31. Zonal-wise Family Prayer meetings are conducted on 1st and 3rd Fridays of every month under the leadership of Vicar/Assistant Vicar. Online prayer meetings in English are conducted on 2nd and 4th Fridays.
32. Youth association is actively involved in conducting prayer meetings in English with the participation of students and young people.
33. Gospel wing is leading the initiatives for organising all prayer meetings.
34. Sunday school classes are conducted on every Saturdays and students are taught as per the MJSSA syllabus. Snacks & refreshments are provided to all after the classes.
35. Vanitha Samajam (Women's Association) was actively involved in organising all church events including Harvest Festival, VBS, Parish Annual Day, Annual Feast & Cultural Programs.
36. Church Choir is very active in making the Holy Service live and musical as and when needed.
37. House visits are conducted periodically under the leadership of the Vicar/Assistant Vicar.
38. Fourteen new members were admitted to the parish during the year.
39. The church has distributed a total of £1,500.00 from the charity fund to 5 individuals as support for medical treatment and to one organisation in support of their charitable activities.
40. The church has claimed back £9,302.53 as Gift Aid from HMRC for the year 2021-2022.

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41. Church Property: With enormous support from members and well-wishers, the parish managed to buy the property at 43 Derriagh Road, Lisburn to use it as a church. All legal formalities completed, planning permissions obtained and registration completed in December 2023.

42. Financial activities: During 2023-2024, the total income was £97,312 and the total operating expenditure was £49,617.

Future Activities

The parish is undertaking refurbishment of the newly bought property at 43 Derriagh Road. This includes renovation of the building, car park and fencing. We hope to inaugurate the church in summer 2024.

Approval

This report was approved by the General Body Meeting on 13th April 2024.

For board of trustees,

Daniel Kavalayil

Secretary