

Down Parish Church Annual Report 2022

The Parish continued to readjust as the acute impact of the COVID19 pandemic began to subside, along with our sister Parishes in the Lecale Area Mission Partnership.

- Weekly worship in St Margaret's Church continued
- Pastoral care delivered by clergy and others became more involved, with an increased number of home visits as appropriate.
- We continued to maintain strong links with local schools through representation on Boards of Governors and through assemblies.
- We also began two new programmes in Downpatrick Primary School – a reading support scheme (selection of personnel in place end 2022, due to begin in 2023) and an after school bible club.
- Youth Ministry in LAMP continues to be based in our facilities.
- Occasional services (Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals) also took place as arranged.

We continue to be the main partner of the Pepper Johns memorial Community Programme. Pepper Johns, like many voluntary organisations, continues to struggle to find core funding in a post-COVID marketplace. However, the vital work of the group in suicide prevention, mental health support, combatting isolation in seniors and men's work (including a Men's Shed due to open in 2023) is vital.

The main source of income for the Parish is through voluntary donations from parishioners. Sadly, in the past several years a number of our most generous contributors have passed away and this has had a significant detrimental impact upon our income. We have worked hard to maximise income from our suite of halls, but such regular use also brings with it expenditure. We have also invested in a property which brings in rental income. A major part of our significant deficit for the year 2022 is accounted for by our support of the work of Pepper Johns. Energy bills in the year 2022 also rose significantly.

In 2023, it will be necessary for the Select Vestry to consider seriously additional means of fundraising. We will also need to review our expenditure although some of this is connected to the governance structures of the Church of Ireland and beyond the Parish's direct control.