

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.
- Continuation of two programmes in Downpatrick Primary School – a reading support scheme 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 is vital. Accessing core funding continued to be a challenge in 2023, although we are preparing to make several significant applications in 2024 for which we are hopeful.

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 and securing regular funding for that project will help the parish finances. Energy bills continue to be high.

During 2024 we will be considering how to increase our income through growth of the congregations, and we will continue to be mindful of our spending in order to be as frugal as possible.