

Crescent Church Belfast

Trustees' Annual Report

Year ended 30 June 2023

The trustees present their report and the unaudited financial statements of the charity for the year ended 30 June 2023.

Reference and administrative details

Registered charity name Crescent Church Belfast
Charity registration number NI103629
Principal office 6 University Road
Belfast
BT7 1NH

The trustees

Mr D Bingham (Retired elder)
Mr G Glass (Elder)
Mr R Abraham (Elder)
Mr J Crookes (Elder)
Mr D Farrell (Elder)
Mr J Graham
Mr W Johnston (Elder)
Mr R Scott (Resigned 2 January 2023)
Mr M McNeice
Mr N Boyd (Elder)
Mr N McMullan (Elder)
Mr T Cullen (Elder)
Mr J Donaldson (Elder)

Independent examiner John Magee
631 Lisburn Road
Belfast
BT9 7GT

Structure, governance and management

The method of appointment of Trustees of Crescent Church is set out in the Declaration of Trust for Crescent Church. At Crescent Church there are currently thirteen Trustees who are accountable for the management and administration of the charity. In accordance with the Declaration of the Trust the Trustees have delegated their powers to a committee of elders who are responsible for the spiritual leadership of the Charity.

The Trustees met twice during the year. The elders meet on the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month. Given the wide responsibilities of the eldership, the elders have created a number of committees, each dealing with a particular aspect of church life. These committees which include Ministry, Mission, Evangelism, Youth and Finance are all responsible to the elders and report back to the elders regularly, with minutes of their deliberations being received by the elders and discussed as necessary.

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Trustees' Annual Report *(continued)*

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Objectives and activities

Aim and purpose

Crescent Church is a Bible-based Christian fellowship which has served God in Belfast for over a century. We seek to understand and live by the Bible, to give everyone the opportunity to become mature and devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

Objectives and activities

When planning our activities for the year, the trustees have considered the Commission's guidance on public benefit and, in particular, the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of religion.

In the New Testament, a local church consisted of all Christians in a given locality, but now there is practically no complete expression of this principle. Nevertheless, in accordance with the teaching of the New Testament, Christians may meet together and function as an independent, self-governing church, recognising the authority of God's Word, the Lordship of Christ and the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit. It will give expression to the teaching of the New Testament in its worship, doctrine and service.

In accordance with this guidance and to follow our objectives as laid out in our Declaration of Trust, we have the following stated objectives:

- a. To advance the gospel of Jesus Christ among the general public, in accordance with the biblical principles and practice both in the UK and abroad in a manner consistent with the statement of faith appended as schedule 1;
- b. To prevent or relieve poverty among those in hardship;
- c. To relieve those in need due to their adverse circumstance; and
- d. To advance education among those who are disadvantaged due to their adverse circumstances.

These objects may be pursued in the United Kingdom or abroad at the discretion of the Trustees.

To facilitate this work it is important that we maintain the fabric of Crescent Church and the adjoining church halls.

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Achievements and performance

Achievements and performance

Crescent Church has a number of services and activities that take place each week and during the course of the year that the members of the public and members of the Church find both beneficial and spiritually fulfilling.

Public worship

We have three services each Sunday, two in the morning and one in the evening.

On Sunday mornings, we have two services: our communion service which starts at 10.00am with an average weekly attendance of 150 and our morning family service at 11:00am which would have approximately 200 people attending regularly. Creche facilities are provided for both of these services and our Sunday School runs during the morning family service.

The Sunday evening service which is held each week at 7:00pm and has an average weekly attendance of approximately 150, many of whom are visitors to the Church. Our young people's Bible class, known as CY (Crescent Youth) aimed at 11-18 year olds runs during the normal evening service. All services are open to members of the public.

It is our firm conviction that the Bible has an important and relevant message for society and for individuals. We are convinced that the Bible, as originally given, is completely true and accurate. It is our only authority for what we believe and practice. The Church plans its Bible teaching and outreach programmes with care. The programmes run on a three-yearly cycle, with each series of consecutive teaching generally lasting around five weeks. The programme is delivered by a mix of visiting speakers from the UK and Ireland, and our in-house Bible teaching team.

Fellowship - Prayer and Bible studies

Fellowship life is not confined to Sundays. The Church meets for prayer every other Thursday evening at 8.00pm with an average attendance of 40 people and depending on the speaker (e.g. an overseas missionary) we sometimes hold the prayer meetings on-line using zoom. There is a group of approximately 10 - 15 members who have continued to meet every weekday for prayer at 7:00pm.

Crescent is an urban Church. Many of our members live some distance from the building in University Road so we have a well-established network of regional Prayer and Bible Study groups which meet once a fortnight in the homes of Church members. These groups provide an invaluable way to get to know other people in the fellowship. There is one regional Prayer and Bible study group that meets on-line via zoom and one that meets on a Tuesday morning in the Church building.

Working together

The life of a large Church fellowship needs to be co-ordinated. We organise ourselves using five committees and about twenty work groups. The committees cover finance, youth policy, ministry, overseas mission, outreach. We also have a number of "Co-ordinators" who are responsible for the physical fabric of the building, for Health & Safety issues, Child Protection and audio-visual support for our services. These work groups cover everything from catering to communications and security.

Day to day co-ordination of church life is carried out by our part-time support team. The team is made up of four salaried staff members, supported by a number of volunteers from the Church. The support team does more than administration: it mobilises the development of new ministries and organises all the technical, safety, and ministry training which our youth leaders require.

Caring for the Church

We believe that Church leadership is not vested in one person. The Biblical model is that leadership in the Church should be plural: it is given to a team of "elders", who are responsible for providing pastoral

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care and upholding the timeless principles governing Church life laid down in the Bible.

Crescent Church has a pastoral care team that visits members who are not able to attend church services regularly and also provides pastoral support to members and their families in times of illness and bereavement.

Overseas Mission

Crescent Church has a long history of supporting overseas mission. A number of missionary families from the Crescent are serving the Lord across the world in South Africa, Spain and Europe. A good deal of fellowship life focuses on supporting overseas mission. One of our ladies' ministries is centred on the support of Christian missionaries across the world. We send teams of young people out most summers to spend time with our missionaries, and in July 2022 we sent a team of 11 to Durres in Albania to run a series of Kids Clubs and support the local church. In August 2022 we ran a community outreach week with a team of 40 people from our Church running a series of events which they invited members of the public to culminating in a musical concert and family barbeque, both of which were well supported by the local community.

Our Mission activity is structured around a number of areas:

1. Commended missionaries - sent out from the Church, and supported financially by the Church, to serve the Lord in various regions of the work building His church throughout the world, 2. Three 3-year mission projects: 2 students at IBEI Bible College in Italy, a church planting project in Argentina and a Bible Education Service (BES) schools project in Ireland. 3. One 1-year mission projects: Support for Waakisa pregnancy crisis centre Uganda, Christian Union Ireland relay worker in Belfast. 4. Mission partners - on-going mission projects and missionary organisations supported by members of our church through ear-marked giving including Mission Albania (TekUra), Echoes of Service, Waakisa Ministries, Tear Fund, St. Nicholas Children's home Kenya, South Belfast Foodbank and Sandes. We also send members of our Bible teaching team into the mission field for short periods, to provide training of national Church leaders.

Family Values

Crescent Church tries to provide a supportive environment for couples who are doing the most important job in the world - raising a family. We provide fellowship opportunities for women to spend time together. Our Overseas Link group normally meets once a month on a Monday night to enjoy a varied programme focussed on mission. We have recently initiated a women's Bible study programme which has been well supported over the year and number continue to grow.

Youth Activities

Young people need the right sort of social context in which to develop. They need to get out and about, develop a network of friends, and learn from good role models. The Crescent normally operates an extensive youth programme, however, because of the pandemic much of the work was suspended throughout the year. The Church continued to operate a Youth Fellowship (Crescent Youth or CY) and a Sunday School (Crescent Kids or CK). All our workers operate under the auspices of the Church's Child Protection and Safeguarding policies. From September 2019 the church has employed a full time Youth and Young adults worker to co-ordinate youth work. Crescent young people are encouraged to become part of the church's community life, rather than live in a separate sub-culture. During the month of August our services are designed primarily to support children and teenagers. Our aim is to facilitate the development of relationships across the generations so that young people will be supported and encouraged by the adults in the Church.

Student Ministries

Crescent is situated at the heart of the student scene which has grown up around Queen's University Belfast.

The Crescent Bible teaching team places a particular emphasis on apologetics, helping us "give a reason for the living hope within us". We have a student support team available throughout the week

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to help and equip students.

The Church operates a ministry in conjunction with Queens University Belfast Christian Union which is attended by on average 30 students. It is designed to cater to the needs of International students.

Other activities

There are a number of other activities that take place on a regular basis, including:- "Rooted" Bible teaching and fellowship for approximately 20 to 25 young adults;- English Language Class meets on a Wednesday to teach English to non-English speakers living in the vicinity of the Church. This class continues to be well attended and moved on-line during the pandemic. - A number of our members actively volunteer with South Belfast Foodbank - Trussel Trust, and the food collection is supported by the wider congregation.

Financial review

Financial review

Total receipts on unrestricted funds were £292,747 Restricted donations of £112,811 were also received, giving a total income of £405,558 which is detailed in the Financial Statements.

The car park continues to be let from Monday to Friday, providing gross income of £17,424.

£162,380 was spent to support the Christian ministry from Crescent Church, and £91,819 was spent on the running of the church. A total of £5,520 was spent on refurbishment work around the church. The net result for the year was an excess of receipts over expenditure of £141,622. Adding the bank balance brought forward at the beginning of the year, the balances carried forward at 30th June 2023 totalled £440,315 (including £80,975.60 from the closed building fund). The building fund account was closed in error by the Bank of Ireland with a closing balance on 14 Dec 2021 of £80,975.60, a further £39,730 has been donated to the building fund, giving a balance £120,705.60 which has been set aside towards the future work on the church building and infrastructure, and is now included in the current account.

Reserves policy

The Finance committee policy is to maintain a balance of unrestricted funds (if possible), which equates to two months unrestricted payments, equivalent to approximately £50,000, to cover emergency situations that may arise from time to time. The balance of unrestricted funds of £319,609 (equates to current account £440,315 minus the building fund closing balance £120,705), was in excess of this target.

Serious incident reporting

No serious incidents or other matters occurred that needed to be brought to the Charity Commissions attention.

Funds held as custodian trustee

Crescent Church does not administer the funds of any other entities.

Exemptions from disclosure

No exemptions from disclosure were applied for.

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Schedule 1. Statement of faith

Here at Crescent Church, we seek to understand and live by the Bible, to give everyone the opportunity to become mature and devoted followers of Jesus Christ. We live in a world full of different religious beliefs (or no beliefs), and so the following points define the core beliefs and practices of the church.

The Bible, as originally given, is the verbally inspired by God. Through it God speaks to us and every word is infallible. It is our only authority for what we believe and practice.

There is only one God, revealed in the Bible as three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. These three are One God, co-eternal and co-equal.

The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became man, being conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He is perfect and eternal God, and perfect sinless man.

God created man, male and female, in his image and likeness. Because man sinned, universal sinfulness and guilt renders everyone subject to God's righteous wrath and condemnation.

The death of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross was on behalf of sinners and a sacrifice to God and a propitiation for remission of sin. Through His sacrificial death there is redemption from the guilt, penalty and power of sin. He is the only mediator between God and man.

On the third day after His crucifixion, the Lord Jesus Christ was raised in His physical body from the death. He was seen alive by his disciples during the forty days after His resurrection and in His risen glorified body.

He ascended into heaven to the right hand of God the Father and is now the all-sufficient High priest of His people.

The Lord Jesus Christ will personally return to raise the dead in Christ and they together with living believers will meet Him and reign with Him.

Salvation is not by works but through repentance for sins and faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God alone. By an act of God's undeserved mercy, the believing sinner is forgiven all his sins, is justified before God, receives eternal life and is accepted as righteous in His sight.

At death the spirit of man does not cease to exist or become unconscious. The dead will be raised either to eternal life or eternal separation from God

There will be final judgment for those who have not been saved and whose names are not found in the Book of Life.

The Holy Spirit convinces individuals of their sin and leads them to faith in Jesus Christ and makes them alive in Christ. He indwells every Christian, producing in them holiness of living, good works and increasing likeness to Christ in character and behaviour, and empowers them to witness in the world.


There is one Universal Church, the body of Christ. Into the body of which the Lord Jesus Christ is head, all Christians have been baptised in the Holy Spirit.

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The trustees' annual report was approved on 29 February 2024 and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:

 5th April 2024

George Glass
Chairman of Trustees