



West Kirk Presbyterian

A congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

Trustees' Annual Report

for the year ended 31 December 2022

Registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland

Charity Commission NI Registration No: 104287

West Kirk Presbyterian Church

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The Trustees present their Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2022 including a Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at that date.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

West Kirk Congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
234 - 236 Shankill Road
Belfast
BT13 2BL
Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC104287)

CHARITY TRUSTEES

The Charity Trustees who were trustees at the date of this report were:

David Clawson	Peter Burke	Joseph Cummings
Kenneth Davidson	Noel Hunter	David Kane
Fred Maginnis	Vincent Shortt	Patrick Smyth
George Stewart	Roy Thompson	Michael Waddell
Desi Williams	Norman Windrum	

PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS

Minister:	Rev. David Clawson
Associate Minister:	Rev. Peter Burke
Clerk of Session:	Mr. Roy Thompson
Treasurer:	Mr. David Ritchie

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

PKF-FPM Accountants Ltd.
Chartered Accountants & Statutory Auditors
Unit 1, Building 10
Central Park
Mallusk
BT36 4FS

BANKERS

Ulster Bank
Shankill Road Branch
185 - 189 Shankill Road
Belfast
BT13 1FH

SOLICITORS

Hewitt & Gilpin
Solicitors
Thomas House
14 - 16 James Street South
Belfast
BT2 7GA

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STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT

The Kirk Session

The charity trustees of the congregation are the members of the Kirk Session. Under the congregation's governing document, The Code, the Book of the Constitution and Government of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Kirk Session seeks to watch over and promote the spiritual interest of the congregation and of persons who are not connected with any congregation within its bounds. It ensures pastoral care is in place in the congregation and seeks to further the contribution of the Church to Christian witness and service in the local community. The Kirk Session has delegated to its Congregational Committee the temporal affairs of the congregation including administering all funds and property belonging to the congregation. Members of the Kirk Session are also members of the Congregational Committee and the other members are elected by the voting members of the congregation and serve for a period of 3 years. The present Congregational Committee took up office in January 2019. Following the amalgamation of West Kirk and Crumlin Road Presbyterian Church, the Committee was enlarged by the inclusion of 6 members of the former Crumlin Road congregation. To give sufficient time for this enlarged committee to function well the Kirk Session has decided to delay the election of a new Congregational Committee until 2024.

The Kirk Session consists of the ordained minister and the ruling elders of the congregation. All members are entitled to make proposals, speak and exercise equal voting rights at meetings, except that the Moderator, the minister in active duty in the congregation, has no deliberative but only a casting vote.

Stated meetings of the Kirk Session are held normally eight times in each year, and in 2022 we have been able to re-establish that pattern.

To be chosen for the office of the eldership in the congregation a person must be a voting member and a regular attendant on its ordinances. The selection of those proposed to be called to the office can be either by the congregation or by the Kirk Session. Normally we have adopted the former method. Members proposed are elected if they obtain the votes of two thirds of the voting members present at a meeting of the congregation.

At a meeting of the congregation in January 2022 our assistant minister, Peter Burke, was called to be our Associate Minister and was ordained and inducted to that role at a service conducted by the North Belfast Presbytery. Later in this report reference will be made to the particular ministry role to which Peter was appointed.

At the meeting of the congregation in January it was decided to co-opt Paddy Smyth to our Kirk Session; he had been ordained as an elder in his home congregation prior to joining West Kirk. Paddy was installed to our Kirk Session in March at a service conducted by the North Belfast Presbytery.

So we now have an increased number in our Kirk Session of 2 teaching elders and 12 ruling elders.

Presbytery

Under the Presbyterian Church in Ireland form of governance the corporate oversight of a congregation is the responsibility of a Presbytery which superintends generally the spiritual and temporal affairs of the congregations assigned to it by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. West Kirk congregation of the Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the North Belfast Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The membership of the Presbytery consists mainly of the active ministers of congregations assigned to it by the General Assembly, ministers who have retired from active duty and elders appointed by the Kirk Sessions of the congregations in the Presbytery.

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The General Assembly

The General Assembly is the supreme court of the Church, representing in one body the whole Church and acting as its supreme legislative, administrative and judicial authority in dealing with all matters brought before it. The General Assembly is normally constituted during the first week in June for worship and to conduct its business. At the end of business it is dissolved. The membership of the General Assembly consists mainly of the active ministers of each congregation, retired ministers and a representative elder appointed by the Kirk Session of each congregation.

Following 2 years of very restricted meetings of the General Assembly because of the pandemic it was good that a more normal General Assembly was held in June 2022.

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

The charitable purpose of the congregation is the advancement of religion.

West Kirk congregation is a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland, as a Reformed Church within the wider body of Christ is grounded in the Scriptures, and exists to love and honour God through faith in His Son and by the power of His Spirit, and to enable her members to play their part in fulfilling God's mission to our world.

The purpose and vision of the congregation of West Kirk can be expressed in 3 words: Maturity, Ministry and Mission. Our aim is to help our members towards **maturity** of Christian faith through worship and teaching, so that they express that faith in a **ministry** of support, encouragement and care for one another, and in **mission** to the community and world around us as we help in practical ways and share with others the Christian gospel to which we are committed.

The congregation aims to fulfil our Purpose and Vision as a family of God's people by ensuring that our commitment and faithfulness to God and our relationships with each other are built upon the Word and promises of God.

As a family we seek to care well for the young among us as we engage with them, encourage and nurture them in the faith of Jesus Christ.

We seek, in ways which will be described later, to be an outward looking fellowship concerned for the wellbeing of the community in our parish area.

As a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland we believe the Bible to be our supreme authority in what we believe and in how we act. We are committed also to the subordinate standards of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, confident that they set out what we understand the Bible teaches on key matters of Christian faith and practice.

ACTIVITIES AND OBJECTIVES

In our reports for both 2020 and 2021 we were describing patterns of congregational life and activity far removed from the normal because of the restrictions imposed on churches as on much of society by the Covid-19 pandemic. During those years there were several periods during which we could not gather for worship and, when we could, only did so with patterns of social distancing which lessened our sense of fellowship.

None of our organisations could meet, although leaders did make valiant attempts to keep in contact with their members online.

Happily we can report that throughout 2022 we have resumed many aspects of our congregational programme step-by-step. This will be described more fully in the next section of the report.

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ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Worship and Prayer

The congregation meets normally for worship each Sunday at 11.30am in the church building and at 6.00pm in the Halls. Tea and coffee is available prior to the morning service and following the evening service we stay for tea and coffee discussing around tables questions relating to the theme of the sermon and praying together.

We held some services of Thanksgiving for the life of members who died during the year; services in which we sought to comfort the bereaved families and friends.

On Wednesday evenings a small group meet together for prayer. As yet we have not resumed our Home Bible Study Groups.

At 31 December 2022 there were 85 communicant members of the congregation; we held 4 morning and 2 evening communion services.

230 families have currently some level of connection with our congregation.

The average attendance at morning worship during the year was 85, with between 25 and 30 attending evening worship.

Pastoral Care

Pastoral care visitation which was impossible during the Covid-19 pandemic has resumed increasingly as we moved through 2022. It is carried out mainly by our minister, the Rev. David Clawson, and our associate minister, Rev. Peter Burke .

Some elders and others within the congregation help to some extent with this important ministry. We make every effort to support our elderly members who are no longer able to attend worship and those members who are unwell or recently bereaved.

Mission and Outreach

The congregation of West Kirk is committed to and active in outreach to our local community.

Communication of the Christian gospel is a vital part of the programme of our organisations.

In addition we have other activities which have an intentional outreach emphasis. A very important and useful part of our weekly programme is our Thursday Morning Outreach when each week we invite local people in for tea or coffee and the opportunity to chat. Unfortunately, it was impossible to hold this through most of 2020 and all of 2021. We are pleased that we have been able to resume what is a very popular activity with a wide range of local people.

Another means of outreach in the past were the Men's Breakfasts and Ladies' Breakfasts held on several Saturday mornings during the year. It is our intention to resume these in 2023.

Our interest in mission is not confined to the local scene. For many years we have had a partnership with a Christian medical organisation in the Chernobyl region of Ukraine and many of our members support a range of Missionary Societies and Relief Organisations.

Not surprisingly the current conflict in Ukraine has been a source of great concern for those of our members who in the past visited that country. We have been able to contribute financially to churches in Ukraine and neighbouring countries which are supporting those displaced as a result of the war.

The congregation supports the United Appeal for Mission which is a central fund of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. This fund enables congregations to support the wider mission of the denomination carried out on a scale beyond which any congregation could do on its own. The United Appeal Fund provides financial support for mission personnel at home and overseas, assists congregations with the deployment of locally based staff, enables church planting, provides grant support for the upkeep of church premises and assists with the running costs of Union Theological College, the Church's training college for ministry students.

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Presbytery

The congregation was represented at the meetings of Presbytery in 2022 by our 2 ministers and 2 of our elders who played their part on some of the the Presbytery's Committees and Panels.

The General Assembly

At the 2022 General Assembly we were represented by our 2 ministers and 2 of our elders. In addition, one of our senior elders was appointed as a member of Assembly by its Nomination Committee.

Property

The oversight of our property is the responsibility of one of the sub-committees of our Congregational Committee. During 2022 some important improvements were carried out in our manse and routine work in our church buildings.

Organisations

We give this brief summary of the activities carried out during the year in some of our organisations as they resumed more normal programmes after the disruption caused by the pandemic.

Children's Church : During morning worship children up to the age of about 9 years old move into the Church Hall at the point when the sermon will begin and they receive Bible teaching.

The Monday Club : After almost 2 years of being unable to meet, this activity for children of primary school age resumed in September. The children enjoy a programme designed to encourage their educational, physical, recreational, social and spiritual development.

In August some of our leaders, along with a PCI team of Young People, ran a 3-day Holiday Bible Club attended by about 60-70 mainly local children. As we hoped would happen, some of these girls and boys then joined the Monday Club.

Presbyterian Women : This group meets monthly during the autumn and winter for a programme designed to stimulate interest in and support for the mission of the Church at home and overseas, so many of their guest speakers will represent such work. Since resuming in October the group has been glad to welcome several new members.

Girls' Brigade Company : This Christian organisation meets each Tuesday evening in several sections catering for girls, ages 3-18. They carry out a varied programme as devised by the central GB organisation.

Guide Company : The various sections of the Guides meet on a Thursday evening. They are registered separately with the Charity Commission and will submit their own report.

Alcoholics Anonymous Group : While this organisation is not under the oversight of our congregation, we are glad to accommodate this local group in our Halls each Wednesday evening.

Volunteers

The Trustees acknowledge with gratitude the invaluable service given by those members of the congregation who lead with great dedication the range of activities described in this report.

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The Church Plant at Carlisle Circus

In our 2021 report we described the steps which had begun in the autumn of that year towards planting a new church at Carlisle Circus in one of the buildings owned by the North Belfast Presbytery Urban Mission Trust on the site of the former St. Enoch's Presbyterian Church. The ordination and induction of Peter Burke as our Associate Minister was an important step in making this a reality.

So in February 2022, Grace and Hope Community Church, the name given to the church plant, began to have morning services every Sunday, meeting in the Memorial Hall. Initially about 30 people attended each week, but by the end of the year the attendance has risen to 50-60. On occasions as many as 10 nationalities are represented at the service along with, from time to time, a few local people from the lower Shankill and lower Antrim Road communities. The hall in which they meet is smaller than they require and they hope that soon they will be able to use another building on the site, the Hopelink Centre, which is big enough to allow for a further increase in their attendance and also would provide adequate space to hold a creche. Grace and Hope Community Church is part of West Kirk and is under the oversight of the Kirk Session. Two of our ruling elders have joined our associate minister as a leadership team, and at each Kirk Session meeting a report on the progress and ministry of Grace and Hope is presented so that the Session can make major policy decisions about this important development.

PUBLIC BENEFIT STATEMENT

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland meets the public benefit requirement by providing benefit to its members and the general public by making known the Christian Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ through the advancement of religion.

The direct benefits which flow from the purposes of the Church include the gaining of an understanding in Christian beliefs as set out in the Bible and in the Church's subordinate standards (the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Shorter and Larger Catechisms) leading to spiritual and moral development and opportunities for response to Bible teaching. In turn, this framework leads to practical expressions of Christian beliefs and standards in the local community such as through the care of those in need (including the sick, disabled and bereaved).

Generally the above benefits are delivered locally by congregations and their members, or are facilitated through Presbyteries or are organised and delivered centrally. Local delivery is facilitated by central resources in almost all cases. Public access is made known through the use of notice boards, printed material, press advertisement, websites, and social media or in other ways.

The benefits are demonstrated through regular evaluation of the services and informal and ad-hoc feedback from members, their families, and members of the public.

The purpose does not lead to harm. The only private benefit flowing from our purpose is related to Ministers, Missionaries, Deaconesses, Irish Mission workers and Lay Agents who receive benefits as a result of their holding office or employment. However, this is incidental and necessary in order to further our charitable purpose. There are no other private benefits. The beneficiaries of this purpose are members, their families, other individuals that the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is in direct and indirect contact with, the community in which pastoral services are provided and other communities throughout Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, and worldwide which benefit from our engagement with and support for both Christian and other secular organisations, charities and individual members of the public.

The Kirk Session has had regard to the Charity Commissions Public Benefit requirement statutory guidance.

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FINANCIAL REVIEW

The congregation's main source of income is members' contributions through the Weekly Freewill Offering ; and in recent years members have been encouraged to donate directly to the Church's bank account using a Direct Payment scheme.

There were 113 contributing families during the year [112 in previous year, 2021] donating a total of £69,927 (£67,389 in previous year, 2021). In addition, an amount of £9147 was received in respect of the Grace and Hope church plant.

Total Receipts of the congregation during the year were £316,449, compared to £130,861 in the previous year. This included the sum of £177,613 from the bank account of Crumlin Road Presbyterian Church following it's amalgamation with West Kirk.

No further grants were receivable in respect of Covid-19 precautions or Women's Worker funding.

Total expenditure increased from £143,740 to £215,507, mainly due to repayment of a loan of £48,253 in respect of our Assistant Minister's salary, until such time as the Crumlin Road funds became available.

In addition, the rise in the costs of heating oil and electricity added to our expenditure , along with necessary repairs to the upkeep of the Manse.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The purpose of this statement is to distinguish the Trustees' responsibilities for the accounts from those of the Independent Examiners as stated in their Report.


The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements of the congregation in accordance with applicable law and generally accepted accounting practice.

As the congregation's total income does not exceed £250,000, excluding the proceeds of an amalgamation with the Former Crumlin Road Presbyterian Church, the Trustees have elected under Section 64(3) of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 to prepare a Receipts and Payments Account and a Statement of Assets and Liabilities.

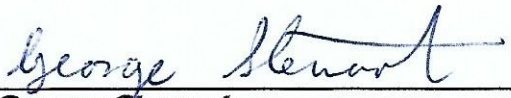
The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the congregation's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time its financial position.

They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the congregation, and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Signed to signify approval on behalf of the Kirk Session , by :



Mr Roy Thompson
Trustee & Clerk of Session



Mr George Stewart
Trustee & Chairman of Committee

21st. February 2023
Date

21st. February 2023
Date