

**TOWNSEND STREET CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND
TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT**

The Trustees present their Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Townsend Street Congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
32 Townsend Street
Belfast
BT13 2ES
Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC104316)

CHARITY TRUSTEES

The Charity Trustees who served during the year or who were trustees at the date of this report were

Doreen Anderson (Resigned Sep 2022)	Jack Lamb
Margaret Browne (Resigned Sep 2022)	Heather Murray (Resigned Sep 2022)
Heather Darragh	Ruth Pritchard
Paul Darragh	Colin Skillen
Daniel Fleming (Resigned Sep 2022)	

PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS

Minister	Rev Jack Lamb (Retired Sep 22)
Clerk of Session	Heather Darragh
Treasurer	Colin Skillen

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Liz Crossan
PACEM
Stirling House
Belfast
BT5 6BQ

BANKERS

Northern Bank Limited
T/As Danske Bank
PO Box 183
Donegall Square West
Belfast BT1 6JS

SOLICITORS

King & Gowdy
298 Upper Newtownards Road
Belfast
BT4 3EJ

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STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT

The Kirk Session

The charity trustees of the congregation are the members of its 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 not connected with any congregation who are 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 Sessions 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 ex-officio members of the Congregational Committee.

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

Stated meetings of the Kirk session are held on the first Friday of January, March, May, September and November.

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. Members are elected if they obtain two-thirds of those who vote.

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. Townsend Street congregation of the Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the South 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 an elder appointed by the Kirk Session of the congregation.

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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, administration 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.

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

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

Townsend Street congregation of the Presbyterian Church 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 congregation's mission statement is as follows:

"We are here to show Christ and the church are not just memories of the past but are joyful, alive and relevant to everyone here and now."

As a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, we believe that the Bible is the supreme authority over all we do, and that the Westminster Confession of Faith, along with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms set out what we understand the bible teaches on key matters of Christian faith and practice.

ACTIVITIES AND OBJECTIVES

When active the congregation met for public worship every Sunday and visitors were welcome to join. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was observed on the first Sunday of January, April and October and on the last Sunday in June. All those who had been baptised and who had made a profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ were admitted to the Lord's Supper. The congregation continues to hold regular bible study meetings.

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ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Worship and prayer

The congregation met for worship each Sunday at 11:30am. Following the retirement of Rev Jack Lamb in September 2022, the congregation ceased to meet for worship when the difficult decision was made to dissolve the congregation. A monthly Bible Study carried out by telephone conference call continues to provide an opportunity for members to meet together for fellowship, to study the scriptures and for a time of prayer.

As well as our regular services and virtual meetings during the year we gave thanks for faithful services and sought to comfort those who had been bereaved.

As at 31 December 2023 there were no communicant members and no families contributing to the congregation.

Pastoral care

Visitation and pastoral care continued in 2023 under the guidance of Rev Morris Gault, convenor of the vacancy. Pastoral care assistant was made redundant in December 2023.

Mission and outreach

At a local level the congregation has fundraised for and supported the Ukraine Appeal and the Royal British Legion.

Presbytery

The congregation was represented at the regular meetings of Presbytery by the convenor of the vacancy. This provides an important link between the congregations and the wider structures of the church.

General Assembly

The convenor of the vacancy and one of our elders attended the meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland held in Assembly Buildings, Belfast, in June.

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Property

During the year the congregation incurred expenditure of £4,258 on property maintenance.

Organisations

The Knitting & Crochet Group met weekly with an attendance of around 9 people. They knit small hats go to the Premature Baby unit in the Royal Maternity Hospital and provide knitted vests to Presbyterian Friendship House, who in turn send them to Africa for new born babies. They also knit blankets which are donated to the NI Hospice. Knitted scarves and hats were also donated to the Welcome Organisation for homeless people in the city as well as to Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child for inclusion in shoe box Christmas gifts for children at Christmas. The knitting has carried on in participants' homes following closure.

Volunteers

The Trustees wish to acknowledge their deep appreciation of those who give freely of their time by serving on committees and helping with organisations and other church activities.

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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 noticeboards, 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.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The congregation's main income sources are members' subscriptions to Freewill Offering, grants from the Listed Places of Worship Scheme and investment income. The total income from all sources during the year was £332,851 (2022: £35,606). Income from donations and legacies was £300,414 (2022: £18,483), income from other charitable activities was £259 (2022: £1,300), income from other operating activities was £8,370 (2022: £13,138), investment gains amounted to £20,646 (2022: losses £28,189) and income from grants was £3,162 (2022: £30,872).

Total expenditure in 2023 was £39,818 (2022: £156,543).

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TRUSTEE REMUNERATION AND RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

No Trustee received any remuneration as a result of their Trusteeship of the Charity. During the year one resigned Trustee was employed by the Charity:

Mrs Doreen Anderson as a pastoral assistant	Wages £5,829 (2022: £5,450) Redundancy £3,500 (2022: £0)
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STATEMENT OF TRUSTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

The congregation is registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.

The Trustees are responsible for their annual report and for the preparation of financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Charity and of the net movement in funds of the Charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; *and*
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue its activities.



Paul Darragh
Trustee

21st October 2024



Colin Skillen
Trustee

21st October 2024