

**SINCLAIR SEAMEN'S
CONGREGATION OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND**

**Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statements
For the year ended 31 December 2022**

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC104375)

**SINCLAIR SEAMEN'S CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND
TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT**

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

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

*Sinclair Seamen's congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
Corporation Square Belfast BT1 3AJ
Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC104375)*

CHARITY TRUSTEES

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

*Mr William Johnston
Mr William Chambers (deceased 23rd July 2022)
Mr Samuel John Heading
Mr Aaron Duff
Mr William Greer
Rev Dr William Parker*

PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS

<i>Minister</i>	<i>Rev Dr William Parker</i>
<i>Clerk of Session</i>	<i>Mr William Johnston</i>
<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>Mr David Carlisle</i>

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Mr Roy Eakin

BANKERS

Ulster Bank, York Road, Belfast

CHURCH SOLICITORS

Hewitt & Gilpin, Hollywood Road, Belfast

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 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 ex-officio members of the Congregational Committee.

The Kirk Session consists of the ordained minister and the ruling elders of the congregation. All members are entitled to propose, speak and exercise equal votes 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 at least seven times in each year or when required.

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 the votes cast.

On 23rd July 2022 the congregation was saddened by the death of Mr William Chambers, an esteemed ruling elder, former Clerk of Session, and trustee of Sinclair Seamen's.

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. Sinclair Seamen's congregation has been assigned to the North Belfast Presbytery. 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 each congregation.

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 annually for a number of days 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.

Sinclair Seamen's 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 the world.

As part of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the congregation at Sinclair Seamen's believes that the Bible, God's Word, is the supreme authority over all we do.

The congregation's mission/purpose statement is Anchored in the Word. Gathering for Worship. Scattering to Serve. Being Disciples. Making Disciples and this is based around what Jesus Christ, the sole Head of the Church, said were the two greatest commandments and what He gave as the one great commission.

The Two Greatest Commandments

*"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." ...
"Love your neighbour as yourself." All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments. (Matthew 22:37-40)*

The One Great Commission

*"... go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you ..."
(Matthew 28:19-20)*

Gathering to Worship

At Sinclair Seamen's our main gatherings for worship take place on Sundays. Our worship is regulated by how God prescribes He is to be worshipped in the Bible.

Scattering to Serve

After gathering on the Lord's Day (Sunday) we then scatter to where God has placed us, in His Divine providence, in order to serve Him in our daily lives by loving Him and loving all other people.

Being Disciples

We serve Him by placing ourselves under the discipline of the Lord Jesus' teaching, which is found in the Bible, and so, by God's grace, live as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ wherever we are.

Making Disciples

We seek to obey the command of the Lord Jesus Christ to make disciples so that people of all ages may become His fully devoted followers.

ACTIVITIES AND OBJECTIVES

The congregation normally meets for worship every Sunday and visitors are made most welcome. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is normally observed on at least five occasions during the year and all those who have made credible profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are invited to partake. In addition to its weekly acts of public worship the congregation normally has a range of other activities including:

Midweek fellowship for Bible study, discussion and prayer

Sunday School

Presbyterian Women

Weekly Prayer Meeting

Occasional Choir

Praise Group

Our historic Church Building opens each week (or by arrangement) for visitors and tours

Outreach to young people who use Belfast Urban Sports Park close to the Church Building

iCafe for international students studying at the nearby university campus.

Annual Summer Bible Club for pre-school and primary school age children

Annual Christmas Bible Club for pre-school and primary school age children

Participation in the annual European Heritage Open days

Participation in the annual Maritime Festival

Participation in other community events as appropriate

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE FOR YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2022

Worship and Prayer

The congregation meets for worship twice each Sunday - at 11:00am in the Church building and at 6:30pm in the Lower Hall of our Church Hall complex. On Sunday mornings throughout 2022 as we worshipped God we continued with an exposition of the book of the Acts of the Apostles. On Sunday evenings, in a less formal setting, we worshipped God and finished our exposition of the book of Zechariah before beginning an exposition of the book of Philippians. On Sunday evenings opportunity is given to the congregation to discuss the exposition of God's Word after the sermon just prior to a time of open prayer.

At 31st December 2022 there were 47 communicant members and 173 families connected to the congregation. The average weekly attendance at morning worship was around 42 people and attendance at evening worship averaged around 16 persons. In the previous year, 2021, the averages were 43 persons and 18 persons respectively.

On Sunday mornings during 2022 when we gathered for worship, on occasions the praise group helped lead the congregation in worship. We are grateful to Mr Jonathan Burnside who, on occasion, helped us in morning worship by playing the church organ in the absence

of our organist, Mrs Esther Parker, who was fulfilling speaking engagements in her role as Presbyterian Women President.

Membership

The Kirk Session admitted one person to full communicant membership of the congregation in March 2022.

Thanksgiving for the Birth of a Child

The congregation participated in a service of thanksgiving, in May 2022, for the birth of a child to parents from the congregation.

Midweek Meetings

Throughout 2021, due to mitigations associated with Covid-19, we continued with our Thursday night ZOOM prayer meeting. These ZOOM meetings continued until March 2022. Our first in-person midweek of 2022 took place on Thursday 31st March. We met in the Lower Hall and commenced, as part of rolling out our Navigating Our Way (NOW) strategy (see below), an eight-week course on Biblical Peacemaking called *The Peacemaking Church*. Twenty-one people enrolled for the course and it concluded on 9th June. Following the summer recess midweeks recommenced in October 2022 and we picked up with our study, which had to be suspended because of the first Covid-19 lockdown, *I Will Build My Church – Twenty Centuries of Church History and Counting*. An average of 18 people attended our midweek services.

2022 Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The congregation held its AGM on Thursday 16th June 2022 in the Lower Hall. The first half of the evening was given over to formal reports by Mr Bill Johnston (Clerk of Session), Mr David Carlisle (Treasurer), and Rev Dr Bill Parker (Minister). The church accounts were accepted by those attending after they were explained, proposed and seconded. The second half of the evening consisted of having some savoury snacks followed by a table quiz and a Beetle Drive. All in attendance had a very enjoyable evening.

Pastoral care

Regular general pastoral visitation of the congregation throughout the first eight months of 2022 was not undertaken due to the continuing presence of the Covid-19 virus and as a result of caution urged by the leadership of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. General and reactionary pastoral care by the Minister was undertaken mainly through telephone calls. However, since September 2022 the pre-Covid routine of general visitation of the members and adherents of the congregation was recommenced. Members of the Kirk Session, the Church Committee, and members of the congregation, also provided general and reactionary pastoral support through telephone calls and/or pastoral visits.

Mission and Outreach

Uganda (Waakisa). Members of the congregation who normally travel to Uganda (Waakisa) in the summer of each year were again unable to undertake this ministry in 2022 due to issues surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic.

Child Evangelism Fellowship of Ireland (CEF). One young person from our fellowship was a leader in a Summer Camp organised by CEF.

Belfast City Council Bridges Urban Sports Park. Weekly outreach to the Belfast City Council-operated Bridges Urban Sports Park, not being hampered by any lockdowns in connection with Covid-19 for the first time in two years, recommenced its normal pattern. The Minister and another member of the congregation continued to forge relationships with the young people by spending time with them in the Sports Park, normally each Saturday afternoon. Numbers attending the Urban Sports Park have declined as a result of the opening of 'Skate 100 @ V36', a new 14,000 square foot, £750,000 EU peace funded urban sports facility at the Valley Leisure Centre, Newtownabbey, in May 2022. However, sufficient numbers still make use of 'Bridges' to justify our regular ministry. The monthly event in Sinclair's Church halls that had been running for the Sports Park young people, and that was suspended since 2020 as a result of Covid-19 mitigations, has yet to recommence.

Summer Outreach. The Minister was well received in door-to-door visitation, in Pilot Street, Princess Dock Street, and Short Street, to inform parents and children of a planned open-air 3-Day Club for pre-school and primary school aged children, in June 2022. Unfortunately, this event had to be postponed due to a number of the volunteer team falling ill. The outreach eventually did take place in Barrow Square, a paved performance area close to our Church premises, in early September 2022 just prior to the children recommencing school. We had an average attendance of eight children each night with some of the children being accompanied by their parents. Over the three evenings we made contact with 16 different children and young people.

Christmas Outreach. In December 2022, and as a follow-up to our summer 3-Day Club, we held a one-off Christmas Club in St Joseph's, a deconsecrated Chapel that is now a community centre, in Sailortown. Once again, the Minister was well received in door-to-door visitation, in Pilot Street, Princess Dock Street, and Short Street, to inform parents and children of this event, and nine children and young people turned up on the night, along with some parents. A team of four from Sinclair's, together with the Child Evangelism Fellowship of Ireland Local Director, conducted the club. Each child went home with a 'goody' bag.

iCafé. iCafé was an exciting new development for our congregation in 2022. For a number of years now, as a congregation, we have been attempting to establish a significant ministry among students in the Cathedral Quarter of Belfast. We were privileged to accommodate and minister to the Belfast Campus Christian Union on a few occasions just prior to lockdown in 2020. However, with the completion of the Ulster University Belfast Campus greater opportunities arose. As a result of a meeting in Spring 2022 between Rev Dr Parker and Mr Andrew Morrow, Staff Worker with Friends International, a Christian charity seeking to grow friendship and faith with international students in Belfast, further conversations were had and it was decided to commence a weekly ministry to international students, based in Sinclair's church hall complex, in Autumn 2022. Subsequently, iCafé was launched on Wednesday 28th September 2022. The second meeting, and all subsequent meetings in 2022, took place on Tuesday nights and were organised and run as a corporate effort between volunteers from Sinclair's, a team from the Ulster University Belfast campus Christian Union, and Friends International (Mr Andrew Morrow). Prior to the first two Tuesday night meetings of iCafé Mr Morrow provided training for all involved on how to relate to international students and how to share the Gospel with them. The iCafé evenings were generally well-attended and on one occasion forty plus young people met in our halls. The year ended with a Christmas party at which Dr Parker was invited to speak. We are thankful to God that the iCafé ministry has enabled us as a congregation to reach out to students in the Cathedral Quarter and we look forward to developing this ministry in the future.

We were also thankful that we were able to host some events for the University of Ulster Belfast Campus Christian Union.

Navigating Our Way (NOW) – A Strategy

A reminder of the background to this important document may be helpful. During the first long lockdown of 2020 an initial draft of the Navigating Our Way (NOW) strategy document was produced and was agreed by the Kirk Session. It set out Sinclair's Mission Statement, Vision Statement, Ministry Strategy, plus eight strategy strands and objectives for the revitalisation of the congregation over the next three to five years. At three meetings in February and March 2021 the Kirk Session and the Church committee met to pray and to suggest action steps that could be taken in order to achieve the objective under each strategy strand. The Kirk Session took all the suggestions made and at an away-day in July 2021 agreed upon what were considered to be achievable action steps under each of the eight strategy strand objectives. At a special meeting in October 2021 the Kirk Session then walked through the final version of the document with the Church Committee, who had had significant input to it. As 2021 approached its final two months, as a leadership we began

implementing the agreed action steps of the NOW strategy document. This has continued throughout the year 2022.

A significant rolling out of one of the action steps of the NOW document took place from 31st March until 9th June 2022. As mentioned above under the section on 'Midweek Meetings' we held an eight-week course on Biblical Peacemaking. Twenty-one people enrolled for the course and engaged in enthusiastic participation. A course workbook was provided, and principles of Biblical peacemaking were taught through lectures, drama, and discussion. The course had an optional add-on of four sessions and the group felt it would be profitable to hold them at some stage in the first half of 2023.

Organisations and Facilities

Volunteers. The Trustees wish to acknowledge their deep appreciation of those who give freely of their time by serving on committees, helping with organisations and other church activities, show pastoral concern for members of the congregation, and generally, do what needs to be done in connection with our fellowship.

The all-age **Bowling Club**, because of changing circumstances of key leaders has had to close. The trustees would like to express their thanks to the leaders of the club, past and present, and to all who comprised its membership over the years, making it the enjoyable weekly event that it was.

Presbyterian Women (PW). The Presbyterian Women group met on eight occasions in 2022. Some meetings used themed resources provided for groups, some were addressed by outside speakers and two were social occasions, one of which had a devotional element. Average attendance was 17. The group, along with the rest of the congregation, has been prayerfully supporting the group leader, Mrs Esther Parker, in her year as President of Presbyterian Women, as they did in the three previous years while she served as Home Vice President. Mrs Parker and two others represent the group at the PW Presbytery LINK.

The WhatsApp group **SNAP** (Sinclair's News And Prayer), comprising 24 persons, continues to be an invaluable means of keeping in touch, sharing items of news, praise, and sharing items for prayer.

Twitter. The Church Twitter account @SinclairsChurch has 115 followers and continues to be a means of informing the wider community of church services, church events and news in general concerning the congregation.

Church website. www.sinclairschurch.co.uk also continues to operate for regular church services updates, announcements and contact points. Links to the 65 weekly recorded services that were uploaded to YouTube in 2020 and 2021, and that are on Sinclair's

YouTube channel, *Sinclair's Church*, are still available on the home page of the Church website and folk are encouraged to revisit them or watch them for the first time.

Donations. The congregation continues to be generous in supporting the wider work of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland together with other missionary organisations and charities – the United Appeal of the Presbyterian Church, Presbyterian Women (PW) Mission Fund, Open Doors, Tear Fund, Earl Haig Fund, Northern Ireland Hospice, and Christmas gifts to the elderly and families within our parish. The United Appeal, a central fund of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, enables congregations to support the wider mission of the denomination and to do mission and outreach on a denominational basis beyond what the 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, assists with the running costs of Union Theological College (the Church's training college for ministry students and Deaconesses) and financially supports congregations in the areas of worship, discipleship, global mission, outreach, leadership and pastoral care. The congregation also contributes to the denomination's annual World Development Appeal, Sunday School project and other special appeals.

Presbytery

The congregation was represented at the seven meetings of North Belfast Presbytery in 2022 – 1st February, 1st March, 3rd May, 6th September, 4th October, 1st November, and 6th December – by its Minister, Rev Dr Parker (who completed his year as Moderator of Presbytery at the March 2022 meeting) and one of its ruling elders, Mr Bill Johnston, the Clerk of Session. Presbytery provides an important link between the congregation and the wider structures of the church.

General Assembly

The 2022 annual General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland returned to its normal time of year, taking place in Assembly Buildings, Belfast from Wednesday 22nd June until Saturday 25th June. The Minister, Rev Dr Bill Parker, was unable to attend due to testing positive for Covid-19. However, the congregation was represented by a nominated representative elder, Mr Billy Greer. Our Clerk of Session, Mr Bill Johnston, was also able to attend the General Assembly having been nominated as a Presbytery Corresponding Representative for Rev Cheryl Meban, Chaplain University of Ulster (Jordanstown and Belfast).

Property

The Church property has been regularly maintained.

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.

SINCLAIR SEAMEN'S CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The congregation's main source of income is members' contributions through the Weekly Freewill Offering. (FWO). There were 101 contributors during the year [105 in previous year, 2022 donating a total of £41,691 [decrease of £396.00 on the previous year, 2021 (£42,087). Total Income of the congregation during the year was £79,145 compared to £73,786, in the previous year 2021. Total expenditure decreased from £67,993 to £66,724

Safety Testing and Replacement of equipment for Church Buildings as detailed below

The sum of £2,019 paid E. Wilson & Co Ltd steeplejacks for Testing and Replacement of Lighting Earth Protection Church Building

The Sum of £1,001 paid EES Services Belfast Replacement Testing and Fitting of New Fire Alarm Panel Church Building

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 congregations total Income does not exceed £250,000, the Trustees have elected under Section 64(3) of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 to prepare a receipts and payment 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.

Approved by the Kirk Session at a meeting on Wednesday 8th February 2023
and signed on its behalf by

Signed: Mr William Greer

Date: 08/02/2023

Signed Mr Samuel Heading

Date: 08/02/2023