

Ravenhill Congregation of the Presbyterian Church In Ireland



**Trustees Annual Report and Financial Statements
for the year ended 31st December 2023.**

**Registered with the Charities Commission for
Northern Ireland**

NIC1045281

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Ravenhill Presbyterian Congregation,

Ravenhill Presbyterian Church,

244 Ravenhill Road,

Belfast,

BT6 8EF

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland : NIC104528

CHARITY TRUSTEES

The Charity Trustees who served during the year and were listed as trustees in 2023 were :-

Rev Martin Gray	Mr Stephen Gilliland	Mr Scott Monteith
Mr Denis Marriott	Mr Craig Hutchinson	Mr Denis Moore
Mr Clive Callender	Dr Paul Kingsley	Mr John Murray
Mr Andrew Eves	Mr Josh McCracken	Mr John Patterson
Mrs Hazel Gilliland	Mr Brian McKee	Mr James Ringland
		Mr Peter Scott

PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS

Minister Rev Martin Gray

Clerk of Session Mr Denis Marriott

Secretary Mr John Patterson

Treasurer Mr Clive Callender

BANKERS

Danske Bank

Donegal Square West

Belfast BT1 6JS

The Rev. Marty Gray resigned as Minister of Ravenhill Presbyterian and left the church on the 1st June 2023.

The church remained 'Vacant' for the remainder of the year 2023, but had been given unrestricted leave to call a new minister in 2024.

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 also 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. 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. Stated meetings of the Kirk Session are usually held on a monthly basis.

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. Ravenhill Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the East 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 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 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

Ravenhill 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 Congregations Mission Purpose is to bring the people of our district together so that they may worship God, make a commitment to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, share in fellowship, and to equip and them for effective Christian witness in the local community and beyond.

The congregation aims to live out this mission by

- Conducting weekly times of public worship & prayer
- Connecting with our community through outreach activities
- Providing opportunities where everyone can learn about Jesus from the Bible
- Providing opportunities for fellowship and friendship

ACTIVITIES AND OBJECTIVES

The congregation meets for worship every Sunday morning and evening. Visitors are always welcome to join. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is observed on several occasions during the year and all those who have been baptised and who have made a profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are admitted to the Lord's Supper. The congregation holds regular prayer and bible study meetings and has a wide range of organisations including :

- Shine Sunday Morning Kids' Club
- Mixed Indoor Bowls
- Presbyterian Women
- Girls' Brigade
- Tots & Co. (parents and toddlers group)
- Ravenhill Men's Group
- Ladies Friendship Hour
- Boys' Brigade
- Discipleship Groups
- Free Food Friday
- Young Life Club
- Young Adults Group

Several 'outside' groups' have made use of our halls on an ad-hoc basis.

These include :

- Radius Housing
- Belfast Neighbourhood Network
- Geda Construction Co. Ltd

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Worship and prayer

The congregation normally meets for worship each Sunday at 11 am and 7.00pm.

During the week discipleship groups meet in homes to study the bible and pray together.

The Prayer Meetings on Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings provide an opportunity for members to meet together and pray for the church, community and wider world.

At 31 December 2023 there were 140 communicant members. The average weekly attendance at morning worship was 114 and evening worship was 53.

Pastoral Care

Members of the congregation who are sick, housebound or in hospital are visited by the minister or elders.

Mission and Outreach

At a local level the congregation runs several organisations which are available to residents of the local area around Ravenhill Presbyterian Church. Details of the activities of the organisations can be found below.

Tots & Co

Ravenhill Men's Group

BB

GB

Young Life

Free Food Friday

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 and to carry out 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, assist with the running costs of Union Theological College, the Church's training college for ministry students, and financially supports congregation in the areas of worship, discipleship, global mission, outreach, leadership and pastoral care.

Presbytery

The congregation was represented at the regular meetings of Presbytery by our minister and / or one of the elders. This provides an important link between the congregations and the wider structures of the church.

General Assembly

The minister and one of our elders were nominated to attend the meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland held in Assembly Buildings, Belfast, in June.

Property

The congregation owns the church building and a suite of halls which are used extensively during the week by church organisations. The church building and halls are in a good state or repair. The congregation also owns a manse which is in a good state of repair.

Organisations

Shine : Sunday Morning Kids Club

Shine runs through during the morning service for children in preschool - P6. In Shine, children sing songs, play games, make crafts and learn about Jesus from the Bible.

Mixed Bowls

A mixed bowling club met every Monday during school term time. Due to small numbers the club has not functioned since October 2023

Presbyterian Women

PW encourages women of all ages to come along to the meetings, where they are made very welcome. The PW meets twice a month and usually invites guest speakers to address those attending, refreshments are served at the end of the PW meetings which give those attending an opportunity for friendship and fellowship. The PW also fundraise for various projects throughout the year, including a central project set up by The Presbyterian Church in Ireland (our governing body)

Girls Brigade

The Girl's Brigade meets on Tuesday evenings from 6:45pm - 8:30pm. Currently GB caters for girls 3-14. Explorers (age 3 up to P4), Juniors (p5 to p7), Seniors (Year 8 - Year 10). Our GB members are mainly unchurch children from the local community and the GB encourages them to seek, serve and follow Jesus.

Tots & Co (parent and toddler group)

This provides an environment for babies, preschoolers and those who care for them to meet, for children to develop their social skills, and for carers to share their experiences and support each other. We include members of all faiths and none, and foster the acceptance of everyone in our community. Children have the use of age appropriate toys and parents get to enjoy tea and coffee. Tots & Co has been a very good organisation for making connections with people living in our local area.

Ravenhill Men's Group

This group exists to improve men's social, mental and spiritual wellbeing. The group meets once per month for a mens night out. This could be a purely social event or an event with a spiritual focus. The group aims to provide men in our local community with the opportunity to have fun, make friends and explore faith.

Women's Friendship Hour

The Women's Meeting meets weekly on Wednesday afternoons. Women of all ages are welcome to come along to the meetings, where they are made very welcome. A guest speaker usually addresses those who attend and there is some singing during the meeting. The Women's Meeting gives those attending an opportunity for friendship and fellowship.

Young Life Club

Young Life club is for secondary school aged young people. It meets on Friday nights from 8.15 - 9.45pm. Young Life provides a safe environment for young people to socialise, have fun and explore faith.

Free Food Friday

In partnership with Tesco and FareShare we provide free food every Friday outside our church building on Ravenhill Road. Students from Derryvolgie Halls

also partner with us to serve hot drinks to those coming for food. Church volunteers collect the food from Tesco on a Thursday evening and then open up the church building on a Friday morning. The team are also there to listen to those who come for help. Members of the congregation also supply food items to supplement the donations received from Tesco Ltd.

Boys' Brigade

The Boy's Brigade meets on Thursday evenings from 6:30pm - 10pm. Currently BB caters for boys 4-18.

Anchor Section P1 - P4 Junior Section P5 - P7 Company Section Y8 - Y14

Our BB members are mainly unchurch children from the local community and the BB encourages the advancement of Christ's Kingdom among boys.

Volunteers

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

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 advertisements, 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 source of income is members' contributions through the Weekly Freewill Offering. There were around 102 contributors during the year donating a total of £91,559, excluding Gift Aid.

Total income of the congregation during the year was £182,373 though this did include an insurance payment of £31,344.

Expenditure for the year was £153,909, and this included the £31,000 spend on repairs to the church manse due to water damage and also the rent of temporary accommodation for the manse family while repairs were completed.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEE RESPONSIBILITY

The trustees are responsible for preparing the annual report and the financial statements of the congregation in accordance with the 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 4th June 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

Denis Marriott (Clerk of Session)

and

Clive Callender (Treasurer)