

Second Ballyeaston Congregation of The Presbyterian Church in Ireland

Trustees Report for the year ended 31 December 2023

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC 104913)

Minister's Report

"Better a dish of vegetables with love than a fattened ox with hatred."

Proverbs 15:17

Over the last year Templepatrick Presbytery consulted with each of our congregations, part of a process to help Presbytery flourish. One of the things that came out of Second Ballyeaston's consultation was that we eat a lot.

Well, they didn't quite put it that way.

What they said was, "Based on the combined evidence of the Kirk Session Assessment and the Congregational Consultation of the Congregation, the Future Mission Panel discern and recommends, this Congregation should attract the support of Presbytery and the Councils of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to continue in their mission and ministry."

This is denominational speak for 'keep going.'

In meeting with the panel, representatives from our Session and Committee shared some of the things that we have been doing as a congregation, and food played a large part in it.

Whether cups of tea after worship or bowling club, buttered toast in mothers and toddlers, pancake pilgrimages, harvest pizzas, and praise suppers, BB and Sunday Club BBQs, bun feasts at farmer services and craft fairs, or those profoundly pastoral moments when you have supported grieving families with hospitality after a funeral, we are good at eating.

Every congregation faces challenges, not least with finances, but you as a congregation have been big-hearted in using what we have to make everyone welcome. You don't need a fine feast to have a banquet, or as Proverbs reminds us, the best seasoning is love.

I'm filled with gratitude for the steadfast faith and generous spirit that define our congregation, which allows us to continue to share the Good News of Jesus Christ in a world sorely in need of hope. Please know that your time, talents, and faith make all the difference.

The Parade Manse looks forward to hosting you for lunch from October again this year, when your elders will be inviting each district Sunday by Sunday to help us reconnect with each other, and more importantly, invite others to be part of God's Kingdom. Let's keep sharing our meals and making others feel welcome in Jesus' name.

May God's grace continue to guide us, and may the coming year be one where God's grace shines through our fellowship, service, and witness.

Your minister, Chris.

Session Report

Following the Coronavirus pandemic, the Session has been glad to see a return to more people in the pews, now without the intervening screens, alongside a re-awakening of interest in our various organisations. We understand that there are other congregations who have not fared so well, so we should be very grateful.

Since I last reported we lost, amongst others, one of our own. Jim Reid had been a devoted elder since 1987, whose commitment and wisdom was well recognised by his fellows. To Jim's family and indeed to all those who have been bereaved we offer again our deepest condolences.

Session conducted the election of a new congregational committee and was delighted the response of those who agreed to serve. During the intervening year new members in particular have settled into their allocated duties and worked with great enthusiasm.

You will read in the Financial Report of generosity to others. We commend those responsible for all of our appeals and those who responded so positively.

Last year I wrote about providing a response to Presbytery on what was described as a Future Mission Strategy Report. This concept had replaced the Visitation. We are glad to report that we received a favourable response:

Based on the combined evidence of the Kirk Session Assessment and the Congregational Consultation, the Future Mission Panel discern and recommends, 'this Congregation should attract the support of Presbytery and the Councils of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland to continue in their mission and ministry in the current arrangements, as it is on the Sustain Pathway.'

We are in the process of replying to this document before members of the Panel return to visit us again. We'll work on (a) increasing Communicant Membership whether that is through members coming forward voluntarily or follow-up of those who have taken communion (the Sacrament is open to all who love the Lord) but have not been formally admitted to the Communion Roll, (b) a monthly fellowship lunch, (c) a return to a series of Manse lunches, and (d) a plan to engage with older children and younger adults.

The centre of our congregational life is represented in our Sunday Morning Worship. This is much admired. A recognisable Order of Service, with five praises, readings based on the Lectionary, a children's talk, and a sermon which is relatively concise and to the point, appeals to our congregation. Our Music Leader and Minister blend the praise to the subject of the day. There is opportunity for people to continue worship through fellowship in the Hall once a month or just mingle in the Car Park on the other Sundays (providing the rain holds off). The absence of a regular choir is, unfortunately, a sign of the times. We are pleased to continue to develop the Ministry of Music, though we are sorry to lose a stalwart of the Praise Band with the withdrawal of Thomas Jamison. We would like to express our gratitude to Thomas and would invite other talented individuals to join in once a month.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is celebrated at least five times a year and Holy Baptism on request. Following on from the latter, we are pleased with the number of children present at our morning services, often over 30, but we would be glad to have even more. The children go, for the second part of the service, to Sunday Club (alias Sunday School) where they can follow up on the theme introduced during the first part of the service.

Our agendas do not change much with time. During the year, Evening services were again the subject of much discussion. It had become apparent, by the lack of people attending, that there was a much reduced appetite for the traditional evening service. By concentrating on various changes we have managed over the last few years to make these services more attractive to families and draw a larger audience, blending them with occasional early starts and concentrating on particular themes during the year - relating to Harvest, Christmas, Communion, Lent, Farming and Young People.

We were happy to host a successful training evening on Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults, for both village congregations.

To the Minister and all those who through their service help with the many aspects of the day to day life of the congregation, I offer our deep and unending gratitude. They bring a commitment and vitality to Session, Committee, organisations, special interest sub-committees (Finance, Communication, Property, Reach Out) whilst our Church Officer family continue to maintain our property to an excellent high standard.

Robert McMillen

Clerk of Session



Congregational Committee

The Congregational Committee has a membership of 40. This includes 14 Kirk Session members and the Chairman, Revd Chris Glover. Committee has met on 6 occasions since the last report in May 2023, with an average attendance of 25. Congregational Committee usually met on Wednesdays: 31st May 2023, 27th September 2023, 29th November 2023, 31st January 2024, 18th February 2024 (Sunday) and 27th March 2023. Our final meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 29th May 2024. This will be followed by the AGM.

A new Committee has been elected since my last report and we welcomed 12 new members and the remainder were returned once again. This has led to a more even distribution of talent and workload amongst the sub committees. The convenors of the sub committees have all remained in office since my last report and we are thankful for their enthusiasm and service.

Within the main Committee there are several sub-committees who work tirelessly, planning and managing relevant projects. The chairperson of each sub-committee delivers a report and presents any recommendations to, and seeks authority from, the Congregational Committee, as necessary. This means that Committee members are aware of the entire work of sub-committees and, in turn, can keep the wider congregation informed.

The Business Committee, which consists of representatives of each of the sub-committees, together with the Minister, Clerk of Session, Treasurer, Membership Secretary and the Congregational Committee Secretary, meets half an hour prior to each Congregational Committee Meeting. The standard agenda at Congregational Committee includes:

- Opening Devotions
- Minutes
- Correspondence
- Session-Committee Liaison
- Business
- Communications
- Finance
- Property
- Reach Out
- Any Other Business
- Closing Devotion

Minutes of the previous meeting are circulated in advance to members. A record of attendance and apologies is kept, with members attending signing-in on arrival at the meeting and members who are unable to attend are asked to forward their apologies.

Geraldine Wylie, our Membership Secretary, works extremely hard keeping records up-to-date. Please notify her of any change of address, circumstances, new families etc. so she may keep an accurate and reliable record.

Members of Session and Congregational Committee carry out vestibule duty at Sunday worship. Their presence in the vestibule each Sunday and at funeral services, where the majority of those in attendance are visitors, is much appreciated by everyone. Weekly duties also include organising the collection and counting of the Weekly Freewill Offering. We are thankful to the Finance team for its diligence and stewardship of our Finances.

As a Committee, we very much depend on the support of the congregation and each other prayerfully and practically. Please pray for Committee's work, unity and impact.

Reach Out recently made an appeal for help and have been delighted with the response to their appeal for support for providing hospitality at the many functions, services, funerals and craft fair. We are thankful to those members who

have agreed to support us, giving of their time, baking and hospitality talents. If you haven't signed-up but feel this is an area in which you could help grow and serve our congregation, being practical in your Faith, please speak to Ashleigh Graham or any Reach Out member.

Property Committee has had remedial work carried out to the roof in the Coulter Hall and investigations/repairs are on-going with regard to the damp in the kitchen. Fundraising continues and we are very grateful to have received anonymous donations. The generosity of the congregation has taken many forms, such as giving money, time and professional advice, all given freely and joyfully using our talents and abilities and we celebrate all of them.

Communications Committee continues to organise the weekly Order of Service and PowerPoints, annual reports and other communications throughout the year. Wi-fi has been installed in the halls and church. Gardiner and Chris continue to record and edit our weekly and special services. We are grateful for their time and commitment, allowing us to welcome members and friends who, for personal reasons, face barriers to accessing in-person worship.

More information on the activities of the sub committees can be read under their individual reports.

Under the terms of Christian Copyright Licensing International and Music Reproduction Licences we are obliged to report annually to CCL (Europe) which songs have been printed, projected, recorded, photocopied etc during each licence period. We hold a Church Copyright Licence, Streaming Plus Licence, Music Reproduction Licence, Church Video Licence, PPL Church Licence, CLA Church Licence and Performing Rights Society for Music Church Licence which allow us to legally show DVDs and videos for Church activities. I am responsible for maintaining these licences.

We are very grateful to the McAuley family, our Church Officer family, which provides a service above and beyond the call of duty.

I am grateful to everyone who uses their God-given gifts and passions and give of their time to serve on Committee. I value how everyone works together and I wish to thank everyone who helped me throughout the year, particularly our Minister, Revd Chris Glover, who leads the devotions at the start of each meeting and also for his excellent chairmanship of all the meetings. I also wish to thank the chairpersons of the sub-committees, namely Malcolm Cloke, Ashleigh Graham, Alex Agnew, Gardiner McAuley and last, but not least, our Clerk of Session, Dr Robert McMillen.



Ruth Stevenson
Congregational Secretary

Property Committee

This year we in the property committee have managed to progress some important maintenance projects re the church and manse properties.

The kitchen area of the Brann Hall has recently seen the exterior window and exit door heads removed and repositioned correctly in order to solve problems re damp ingress.

Two extractor fans have also been installed in the kitchen.

Thanks to Nigel Simpson and his team for carrying out the works re the window/door. Thanks also to Geoff Jamison for installing the fans.

The trees around the Ballyeaston border of the church have been pruned and the tree at the church entrance pruned to control a fungal disease. Some trees around the manse borders have also been pruned.

Thanks to Derek Gault and his team for completing the works to a high standard.

The Coulter Hall roof has now been repaired where necessary and totally recovered and painted. The work has been completed well ahead of our August deadline despite some setbacks caused by some very inclement weather.

Our thanks go to Reahill Roofing for completing the work without disruption to church activities.

Property Committee will continue to identify and complete maintenance tasks and complete the work, budgets permitting.

I would like to convey on behalf of us all in the church family a special thank you to Gardiner McAuley. The effort and hard graft Gardiner puts in to keep our property in good condition is invaluable and is very much appreciated.

I would also like to thank all the members of the property committee for their help and guidance this year.

Alex Agnew

Convenor of Property Committee

Reach Out Committee

The Reach Out Committee continues to support the ministry of our church through a variety of events involving our congregation and the wider community.

In May we celebrated the Coronation of King Charles II and Queen Camilla with A Big Community Lunch, tree planting ceremony and coronation cake competition organised in conjunction with our Boys' Brigade company. Thankfully the sun shone and almost 200 people joined the celebrations. Photographs of our day even appeared in The Ulster Tatler!

We rounded off the Sunday Club year at the end of June with a family BBQ after Children's Day.

In July the joint services were held in Second Ballyeaston, and as well as tea and coffee after church on the first Sunday in the month we also had a picnic. Unfortunately, the weather was not so favourable this time and we had to relocate from the grounds of the Manse to the Brann Hall.

September saw the return to organisations and on Saturday 9th September we held a coffee morning and flower demonstrations by Susanna Hassard, One Small Seed Flower Farm, with all monies raised going towards the repair of the church hall roof.

Our very successful Craft Fair was held on Saturday 11th November, with around 20 stalls. Visitors were also treated to morning coffee or lunch in the Coulter Hall.

Throughout the year, the Reach Out Committee supports our evening worship by assisting with Pizza and Praise in September, tea and coffee after our Carols by Candlelight in December and our ever-popular Pancakes and Praise in February.

Our Annual Service for the Farming Community was held on Sunday 21st April. The praise was led by The Clare Chorale and the guest speaker was William Irvine, Deputy President of the UFU. This year's beneficiary was Rural Support.

As always, the Reach Out Committee offers catering for funeral teas and other family events. We are seeking to expand our network of help as we support others at a time of need and show our faith in action. If you feel you could help with catering by providing food for such occasions or helping on the day there is a sheet in the vestibule. Please add your name and contact details. All offers of help will be gratefully received and appreciated.

The Reach Out Committee is made up of willing volunteers. Our thanks must go to them for all their work and to all of those who respond to our requests for help throughout the year.

Dates for your Diary

Harvest Coffee Morning – Saturday 19th October

Craft Fair – Saturday 9th November

Ashleigh Graham

Convenor of Reach Out Committee

Communication Committee

Communication Committee continues to be busy with the production and distribution of posters, leaflets, e-mails and other correspondence to the congregation. This year we worked with Openreach and TalkTalk to install Full-Fibre Broadband giving our buildings access to a reliable, high-speed broadband connection suitable for now and future use. We also worked with Connect Tech Services to install a small Wi-Fi network throughout our buildings to allow all users and organisations to access our broadband connection. This is open to users and can be accessed using the details displayed around the halls.

We continue to maintain our website and post on Facebook as well as sharing the details of our Reach Out Committee's events.

We continue to encourage the use of electronic communications and so would encourage all of our members who have received a printed copy of this report to consider registering, through our website, for future copies to be sent via email. This helps to reduce our costs and reduce our impact on the environment.

I would like to thank the members of the committee for their hard work and dedication throughout the year.

Gardiner McAuley

Convenor of Communications Committee



Finance Committee

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The congregation's main source of income is members' contributions through the Weekly Freewill Offering (WFO). There were 165 contributors to WFO during the year (169 in previous year, 2022) donating a total of £61,112 (£64,546 in previous year, 2022).

Total Income of the congregation during the year was £162,578 compared to £143,526 in the previous year. The main reason for the increase was due to increased donations to special funds such as Coulter Hall and roof repair.

Total expenditure increased from £126,952 in 2022 to £141,043 in 2023 mainly due to increases in General Assembly Assessments, staff costs and congregational running expenses.

RESERVES POLICY

The policy of the trustees is not to accumulate reserves but to use reserves in the promotion of the Charity's objects, and maintain a balance on unrestricted funds that equates to at least six months' unrestricted payments (£48,803) to cover unforeseen situations that may arise from time to time. The current level of reserves are £7,554. The trustees continue to monitor their reserves levels on a periodic basis.

FUTURE PLANS

In March 2020 the church took steps (in line with government advice) to help contain the outbreak of COVID-19. This included the temporary suspension of all physical gatherings and the church had to curtail, or change, how it operates; the church has now been able to resume all of its activities while also using online media. The trustees are monitoring income and expenditure and, if it becomes necessary, will take measures to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the church's free reserves.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

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.

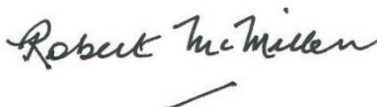
As the congregation's total income does not exceed £250,000, the Trustees have elected under Section 64(3) of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 208 to prepare a receipts and payment account and a statement of assets and liabilities.

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 27th March 2024 and signed on its behalf by



Revd C M Glover



Dr R M McMillen

Organisational Reports

Bowling Club

Daytime bowling has been very successful with between twelve and eighteen members from our community playing on Tuesday afternoons between 2 o'clock and 4 o'clock from September until March.

Most of the members are senior and we had some special birthdays and anniversary celebrations this season. The members enjoy the friendship and fellowship and a game of fun bowling, a cup of tea and a chat which is good for their well-being. It was nice to see Willie Woodside and his grand-daughter Rebecca enjoying some time together, which proves that bowling is a family recreation.

We were sorry at the passing of David Workman from the Glynn near Larne. David was a faithful member of the club since the introduction of daytime bowling.

One of the reasons that David travelled to Ballyeaston was that he enjoyed the friendship of the bowlers and two of his best school and work friends attend the bowling.

David was one month short of his 90th birthday and will be sadly missed. We extend our deepest sympathy to the family circle and thank all those who were able to attend the funeral.

If anyone would like to join us for friendship and fellowship you would be made very welcome and we do have bowls for you to use.

Thanks to Willie Woodside and all who helped with the club this year and thanks to the members for their support.

Many thanks
Wilson Weir

Boys' Brigade

Anchors

Anchor Boys have enjoyed another fun and busy year.

We welcomed 7 boys into our section in September and had a total of 23 boys enrolled at our annual enrolment service in November.

Each week we enjoy doing various activities including crafts, Bible stories, games and, of course dodge ball!

Our theme for this year was 'super heroes' and we learnt about heroes from the Bible including Daniel, Jonah and Esther.

In October we had a 'super hero' themed fancy dress party.

In December we enjoyed a night out to Airtastic with the rest of the company which all the boys loved.



As always, we finished our BB year with our Parents' and Friends' Evening when the boys received their awards for all their hard work throughout the year.

Four boys will be leaving us and moving on to Junior Section in September. We wish Tom, Jack, Jack and Alfie all the best.

We look forward to seeing the rest of the boys back in September and any new boys from P1 to P4 are very welcome.

I would like to finish by expressing my thanks to Susan, Linda, Andrew and Jack for their help and dedication to Anchor Boys each Monday night.

Simon Harkness
Officer in Charge

Juniors

Our 2023 session started with 7 boys, 5 returning, 1 promoted from Anchors and 1 new member.

Our usual meeting night consists of Figure Marching, Scripture, Crafts and Games. This year's Scripture Programme was 'Bible Heros' and was provided by Boys' Brigade NI.

During the year we had a Christmas Outing to 'Airtastic' in Newtownabbey with the other sections and members from the Girls' Brigade. It was a great night out with all the boys and girls having a great time.



We finished the year with our Annual Parents' and Friends' Evening in March where the boys showed their Figure Marching routine and put on a short sketch called 'Search for a Hero'. We awarded the boys their badges and prizes and promoted 3 boys to Company.

I would like to thank Ruth Stevenson for all her help and dedication throughout the year. I also thank the boys and their families for their support. We look forward to seeing everyone back in September along with all the new members.

Gardiner McAuley
Officer in Charge

Company and Seniors

This year 1st Ballyeaston BB company section had a total of 8 boys, with 1 boy moving up from Junior Section. During the year the boys participated in drill, sport, scripture class, badge class, tuck shop, and team activities.

We started the year with a BBQ on 1st September in the church halls.

Enrolment Sunday for the boys was held on 12th November where the boys also participated in the wreath-laying as part on the Act of Remembrance.

For the annual church craft fair on 11 Nov the boys prepared Christmas candy cones, as well as organizing the Bran Tub, where £270 was raised for BB funds.

On the 27th November the BB held a coffee evening in support of The Children's Heartbeat Trust which was well supported and raised £373.

For the Christmas party the BB company went to Airtastic in Newtownabbey on 18th December where the company section participated in ten pin bowling and had pizza afterwards.

On 30th January Andrew Cooper, Billy McIlwaine, Danny McIlwaine, and Thomas Greer represented 1st Ballyeaston BB company in the East Antrim Battalion Quiz where they were placed 3rd. It was an enjoyable evening, helped by the provision of free pizza.

The annual BB Parents' and Friends' Evening was held on 22nd March with the company section performing squad drill and a comedy sketch. Scott Simms accompanied the squad drill on the bag pipes. Trophies and The BB programme badges were also presented.

Andrew Cooper, Billy McIlwaine, Callum McDowell and Thomas Greer were awarded the President's Badge.

1st Ballyeaston BB Company Section would like to thank all the parents, helpers and boys for their continued support throughout the year as well as Anne McAuley for preparing halls for the BB.

For any boys wishing to join next year the company section meets each Monday night from 7.30pm to 9.15pm September to March and is open to boys of secondary school age.

Eric Cooper
Officer in Charge



Captain's Report

We started in September with our Family and Friends' BBQ. This was a great start to the session and it was great to see so many attend and enjoy the games, bouncy castles and food. Our meetings started at the beginning of September and it was great to see everyone back and many new faces.

Earlier in the year we held our Annual Enrolment Service and Service of Remembrance on Sunday 12th November 2023. The service was led by our Chaplain, with boys from all sections taking part by reading the Scripture Lessons and laying the Remembrance Wreath. The service was followed by refreshments in the Brann Hall and it was great to see so many boys and families attend and continue our fellowship in the hall.

In November we hosted a Coffee Evening with funds raised shared between our Company and Children's Heartbeat Trust, with a donation of £373 going to the charity. It was a great evening and I would like to thank everyone for the generous support.

We finished our year with the return of the Annual Parents' and Friends' Evening with the boys putting on a fantastic display for their parents and friends before receiving their awards and badges. The leaders also participated with a sketch, 'A Day in the Life of an Anchor Boy', which was great fun. I would like to thank Revd Eddie McDowell for opening and closing the evening.

I would like to thank all the boys, parents, helpers and officers for all their help and support throughout the year.

We look forward to seeing everyone in September with new members always welcome. If anyone would like to get involved as a helper or an officer, your help will be most welcome, so please come and speak to any of the officers if you would like to join us.

Gardiner McAuley

Captain

Meeting Times

Anchors (Primary 1 to Primary 4) – Mondays 6.30pm to 7.30pm

Juniors (Primary 5 to Primary 7) – Fridays 7.00pm to 8.30pm

Company and Seniors (Year 8 to Year 14) – Mondays 7.30pm to 9.15pm

Girls' Brigade

As one GB year closed, our new GB year was off to a very exciting start with a new arrival.

Jayne Davis, last year's Toddlers leader, gave birth to a beautiful baby girl on 30th May 2023, Isabella Annie, weighing in at 8lbs 2oz. We wish Jayne, Andrew, Olivia and Jessica, health and happiness with their new arrival. Jayne is certainly doing her part to keep the GB membership numbers up!

Our registration evening took place on Monday 4th September 2023. It was lovely to welcome back so many girls and we were delighted to see lots of new members coming along with almost 70 girls now enrolled in the company.

Monday 25th September was our annual MacMillan Coffee Evening. The hall was full to capacity and we were overwhelmed by the support from GB families and the local community. Three griddles were running on full power as the demand for homemade pancakes was greater than ever.

We had hoped to raise £900 this year, but we actually received donations of £1012.00. We are so grateful for all your support. Thank you all once again.

A huge thank you goes to the catering committee in the church who came along on the night to help serve and ensure everything in the kitchen was running smoothly.

Jacksons Butchers supplied all the traybakes and shortbread this year again, so thank you John for all your continued support.

On Thursday 2nd November 2023, our Toddler Leader, Joanne Harkness married Stephen Howe in 2nd Ballyeaston Presbyterian Church. It was a beautiful autumn day and a special thank you to all the girls who turned out in their uniform to perform a guard of honour. You all looked amazing. We wish Joanne and Stephen God's richest blessing for their future together.

Homemade pancakes were on the menu again for the Pudsey PJ Party. Everyone including the leaders turned out in their favourite PJ's and enjoyed lots of pancakes with some super toppings.

Sunday 26th November 2023, was our Annual Enrolment service conducted by Rev McDowell. Our theme was Promises in connection with this year's scripture course. It was the turn of the Junior Section to entertain us with their choir pieces. I am sure everyone will agree, they were outstanding, well done girls! Thank you to the sound team in the church and to all our readers and colour party for making the service such a success.

Toddler Section

It was another great year for the Toddler Section this year. Our hour long session on a Monday evening is always jam packed with activities, starting with marking attendance and neatness in our squads, followed by games and Bible stories.

The highlight of the night is doing arts and crafts. The girls always have something to take home with them at the end of the night.

Other highlights throughout the year were taking part in the Children in Need night, when the girls decorated some Pudsey inspired pancakes and, of course, the Christmas Party with the Explorer Section.

Explorer Section

This has been a really fun year in the Explorer's. We have 28 girls in this section.

Each week, in addition to our scripture course taken by Hannah, we have games, cookery and craft. After all that hard work, it is time for the much anticipated juice and biscuits and the highlight of the evening, our famous tuck shop!

Christmas Party night took place on Monday 18th December 2023.

The Toddler and Explorer sections partied together and had a fantastic night with Claire Sempey from "Jump, Jiggle and Jive". She literally had us jumping, jiggling and jiving all around the hall in our festive sparkles. Thoroughly enjoyed by everyone!

After the Christmas break, we had some circuit-training to help burn off all those selection boxes from the festive season.

Eva & Evie from the Explorer Section, decided to run a Coffee Morning for their friends and family on Saturday 27th January 2024. They had the hall beautifully decorated and raised almost £400.00 for GB funds. Any tray bakes that were left over were dropped off at Hamilton and Clareview Nursing homes for the residents and staff to enjoy. Well done girls, this was very thoughtful. Congratulations to Hannah Thompson, Sub Officer in the Explorer section, who got engaged to her finance James Murphy on 12th September. He proposed in the beautiful Glenariff Forest. Wishing you both every blessing in your future together.

Junior Section

This year in the Junior section we had a lovely group of 15 girls aged from P5 to P7.

We completed our four sections of the GB programme which included Education, Physical, Spiritual and Service.

For our education programme this year we learnt how to look after our skin and hair and were very privileged to have Martha McClenaghan, a local hairdresser, join us to teach the girls how to wash their hair and how to put their hair up in different styles. The girls really enjoyed practising on each other and had all learnt a new skill by the end of the couple of weeks. We also were grateful for Claire Nicholl, a local beautician, coming along to teach the girls how to take care of their skin, providing a demonstration and sharing some facts about the importance of looking after your skin in the sun. The girls all got involved and asked lots of questions.

For our physical programme this year we completed a series of circuits during the year. The girls enjoyed learning new exercises and trying to improve each week. They became competitive, trying to complete the highest number of reps in each exercise.

For our spiritual programme we completed the GB Junior scripture course called 'Promises'. We learnt about various promises in the Bible, including how God promised us a Saviour. It taught us how God promises to give us what we need and not always what we want. Jane Stewart very kindly led our scripture course this year, reading us Bible stories, talking about God's promises and helping us complete our puzzle books. We finished the scripture course by making a Promise jar, to remind us of the promises God had made for us.

The final part of our programme was Service. This year we sang at the GB enrolment for our Service, practicing hard for several weeks before performing for our parents at the enrolment in November.

We have also spent time during the year making crafts, including painting, making bracelets and making mosaic coasters. We were very lucky to have local florist, Jean Robinson, come along and teach us how to make Christmas flower arrangements too.

The girls also spent time in the kitchen this year decorating pancakes and buns with Jane.

We have also been practising marching and doing drill and participated in the annual GB district parade in Carrickfergus, with the Senior and Brigader sections. The service was conducted by Rev John Stanbridge and Rev Dr Cecil Grant.

We also joined the Senior and Brigader sections at Airtastic for our Christmas party with First Ballyeaston Boys' Brigade. The girls enjoyed a night of bowling and pizza at Airtastic.

We have enjoyed meeting each Monday night and in between all the crafts, scripture, and sports, we have enjoyed playing games and eating lots of sweeties.

Seniors and Brigaders

The Seniors and Brigaders started their year with a visit from Susanna Hassard from One Small Seed. Susanna told them all about her business. The girls planted seeds and made their own beautiful seasonal flower jars. It was a great start to the sessions- thank you, Susanna.

Monday evenings have involved many different badge-work activities such as team games, creating prayer books, quizzes and enjoying fellowship together.

The girls enjoyed helping to make up shoeboxes for Blythswood with Jean Currie. They wrapped boxes and supplied some items for teenagers. It was good to forget about ourselves at Christmas and instead think about others less fortunate. They found out about the recipients of the boxes and learnt how excited and grateful they would be for our small gifts.

The girls chose to help the Diabetes UK charity this year by making GB beaded bracelets. They sold them to the younger girls and raised £50 for charity.

At Christmas the girls went ten pin bowling at Airtastic and had pizza and chips too. It was a great night out, which everyone enjoyed.

Every Monday night, Seniors and Brigaders took part in Scripture. This year the theme was promises. They were very lucky to be taught the first number of lessons by Mr McCrea. The girls loved hearing his stories and were inspired and encouraged by his faith in God. Everyone at GB was so sad to hear that Mr McCrea had passed away. We miss him a lot and our thoughts and prayers are with his family.

It has been a very busy year for Seniors and Brigaders and they look forward to welcoming new members in September.

As mentioned in the Company Section report, Uel McCrea sadly passed away suddenly on 22nd January 2024.

Uel played a huge part in the life of our Girls' Brigade company. He was passionate about bringing out the best in each girl and took great pride in delivering the scripture course with care, compassion and sincerity, often relating situations to his own faith. It is a great loss to our GB family and he is truly missed.

We continue to remember his wife Audrey, daughter Alison, son in law Craig, grandchildren Caleb, Micah and Joshua, and the wider family circle in our prayers.

As a company we want to thank everyone involved in our company this year, from our care takers, support from our church leaders, to those involved tonight.

Rev Eddie McDowell, our Chaplin, Dorothy, who accompanies us on the piano, Joe, who is roped into providing our sound system each year, our car parking attendants and care takers. Sincere thank you to each and every one of you.

Our year would certainly not have been a success without you, our parents and friends who bring the girls along each week. Without your dedication, we would not have such a wonderful Girls' Brigade company.

We would ask you to remember everyone in our GB family in your thoughts and prayers, to keep everyone safe over the summer months and that we may all return for fun and fellowship in our new session in September.

Well, our report started with a new arrival into the world and is going to end with one too. Rachal McCord, leader in the Toddler section, gave birth to a beautiful baby girl, 19th March, Ella Elizabeth, weighing in at 8lbs 4ozs. Congratulations Rachel and we wish you every joy and blessing with your new daughter.

Thank you.



Crèche

Our crèche is welcoming and entertaining for babies and toddlers and meets in the Brann Hall.

We encourage parents to make use of the facilities. Depending on your child, parents may either return to the church service or stay with their little ones.

Many thanks to the parents who support this facility and to those who help supervise.

Mums and Tots

Mums and Tots meet every Thursday during term-time 10.30am-12noon.

Parents, grandparents and childminders enjoy a chat with friends over a cup of tea and a bun, while the children enjoy a snack.

Our Facebook page keeps everyone informed on changes to the weekly gatherings.

We are thankful for all the help we receive each week from our volunteers. Without everyone's help the programme would not be possible. A big thank you to Margaret, Meta, Jean, Audrey, Geraldine and Anne. Also a note of thanks to Anne and Gardiner for setting up the hall and Rev Glover for his support and guidance.



If you are free on Thursday mornings to help for a few hours, you will be made very welcome.

Music Fellowship

'The mission of the Music Ministry is to glorify God through the medium of music, using the talents that He has given us to exalt His name.'

This report covers the activities and developments of the Music Ministry in 2nd Ballyeaston Presbyterian Church from August 2023 until April 2024.

We have had a very successful year in Music Ministry this year, introducing several new congregational hymns and children's songs. We have the band playing at the all-age service on the first Sunday of every month and I'm very grateful to Miranda and Victoria for singing on other occasions outside of this.

This year our drummer Thomas stepped down from the band and I would like to thank him for his outstanding contribution to the Music Ministry, both in my time as worship leader and before my arrival. He leaves with my very best wishes and thanks for all his hard work.

We now set our sights on the Rural and Farming Community Service on April 21st, with some choral music being provided by the Clare Chorale as well as our congregational items. We trust that this will be a great service where people will donate generously to the Rural Support offering.

My thanks is extended once again to the elders, committees and individuals who have helped me this year.

Connor McQuillan

Music Leader

Presbyterian Women

PW enjoyed another successful year which started with the annual PW service in September where our guest speaker was Eleanor Drysdale who is the Deaconess in Wellington Presbyterian Church.

In October Suzanna Hassard gave a talk on starting up her business One Small Seed and brought along some of her beautiful flowers to arrange.

It was the turn of 2nd Ballyeaston to host the PW Celebrations Service in November. The speaker was Mrs Joanne Dunlop and over 100 ladies attended.

In December our Christmas outing was in the Kingfisher Hotel Templepatrick. We had a lovely evening, enjoying good company and good food.

In January we joined 1st Ballyeaston where a speaker from Hope 365 updated us on the marvellous work they do for street kids in Africa.

Later in January, Mrs Helen Duff gave us a talk on her sewing business, her love of recycling clothes and the paths her Christian beliefs have taken her.

In February we enjoyed a night to the cinema to see the film One Life.

Joanne McConville came along in March and told us her amazing story of surviving a parachute jump where her parachute failed to open.

For our final meeting in April, Joanne Boal, an art therapist for Cancer Focus, gave us a talk on the wonderful work she does using art to help children and adults during their treatment. The ladies from 1st Ballyeaston joined us on this occasion.

The PW meet on the second Tuesday of each month and all ladies would be very welcome to join us for an evening of friendship, always ending in a lovely cup of tea.

Thank you to everyone for supporting the Mission Box appeal.

A big thank you to the McAuley family for all their help and support setting up our meetings.

Mary Harkness
Secretary



Sunday Club

It has been another very successful year for our Sunday Club. We have continued to meet during church on a Sunday morning and it has been brilliant to see the large number of children each week. Children up to and including Primary 5 met in the Coulter Hall and P6 upwards have met in the Boyd Room. Friendship and fellowship grow each week, which is encouraging and heartening to witness.

Each Sunday the children have taken part in stories, games, songs, prayers, and other activities. Everyone also enjoyed the chance to tell their news and celebrate birthdays etc. They loved listening to Chris in church before coming out to Sunday club to continue the bible story. The children were taught the same lesson as the adults heard in church, in the hope that they could have a chat with their parents about the stories at a later time.

The children loved taking part in their Nativity Play on Christmas Eve. The enthusiasm of our young actors and singers proved to be a fantastic reminder to everyone of the real reason for our Christmas celebrations. We are now looking forward to getting involved in another performance for our annual Children's Day in June.

This year the children have also loved getting involved in all the activities at church, including searching for Haribo at the Easter service, giving out crosses on Palm Sunday, eating pancakes at Lent and decorating stones. They have also enjoyed participating in the church services through singing and reading.

As a church, we are incredibly fortunate to have so many supportive parents and grandparents who have brought the children to church each Sunday this year. We never take this for granted. I am also thankful for the team of helpers who are willing to get involved on Sunday mornings. This is a great help and we are always open to new people getting involved.

I continue to ask that the Sunday club is remembered in your prayers: that our children and leaders continue to grow in their faith and love for Jesus and that our parents continue to bring their children to church each week. Thank you.

Emma Hanna
Sunday Club Leader



Walking Group

The walking group continues to meet at 10 O'clock on the morning of the last Tuesday in each month.

Numbers remain rather low and we would welcome new walkers. The walks are intended to be accessible and sociable and always end with tea/coffee in pleasant surroundings. The focus is on enjoyment rather than endurance, chat rather than competition.

In this last year destinations have included Carnfunnock, Castle Gardens, Galgorm, Jordanstown and a loughside walk at Antrim.

Audrey and Ronnie

