

**FIRST ARMAGH CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND**

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

**Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC104984)**

# **FIRST ARMAGH 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**

First Armagh Congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

Russell St, Armagh , BT61 9AA

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland NIC104984

## **CHARITY TRUSTEES**

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

Miss M Houston

Mrs S Somerville

Mr D Harrison

Mr N Shilliday

Mr N Boyd

Mrs R McCann

Mrs F Megaw

Mrs R Pollock

Mr H McKennell

Mr D Moorcroft

Mr J Leeman

Rev G Mullan (convenor)

Mrs H Stevenson

Mr I H Kyle

Mr L Crowe

Mr M Shaw

Mr J Boyd

## **PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS**

Minister

Vacant

Convenor

Rev G Mullan

Our congregation is currently vacant and our convenor throughout the year was Rev Graham Mullan with Rev Alan Marsh assisting from October to December.

Clerk of Session

Mr Ian H Kyle

Treasurer

Mrs F Megaw

## **INDEPENDENT EXAMINER**

**WHR Accountants Limited**

**Chartered Certified Accountants**

**56 English Street**

**ARMAGH**

**BT61 7LG**

## **BANKERS**

**Danske Bank**

**74-76 Scotch Street**

**Armagh**

**BT61 7DH**

## **FIRST ARMAGH CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)**

### **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 were held 10 times.

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.

Very sadly during the year one of our Elders Ronnie Gamble passed away.

#### **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. First Armagh congregation of the Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the Armagh 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.

## **FIRST ARMAGH CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND**

### **TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)**

#### **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 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.

**First Armagh** 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 purposes is "In First Armagh" we want to:-

1. Focus on the worship of God Father Son and Holy Spirit. In a church which is the First Presbyterian, we worship Jesus who is the first and the last; in a city which is the seat of ancient Kings and ecclesiastical capital we worship Jesus as the ancient of days who sits on the throne, the King of Kings; and in a community which has an observatory we worship Jesus as the bright morning star.
2. Participate in God's mission by being a warm, serving, inclusive church, working in partnership with all who seek to bring in the kingdom of God.
3. Bring healing of memories and the refreshment of the Holy Spirit so that our buildings would be filled with love, peace, truth and justice.

## **FIRST ARMAGH CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)**

### **ACTIVITIES AND OBJECTIVES**

The congregation meets for worship every Sunday and visitors are welcome to join. The Sacrament of the Lords Supper is observed on 5 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 bible study meetings and has a wide range of organisations including:-

- Sunday School
- The Youth Fellowship
- The Bowling Club
- The Presbyterian Women
- The Tuesday Club
- The Reading Group
- Girl Guides, Brownies and Rainbow Guides
- Choir
- Praise Band
- Walking Group
- Junior Church

### **ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

#### **Worship and prayer**

The congregation normally meets for worship each Sunday at 11.30am and once a month at 7pm.

#### **Pastoral care**

Members of the congregation who are unable to attend church due to sickness or age are visited on a regular basis by the minister/elders. They are also able to watch services via "Live broadcasts"

#### **Mission and outreach**

At a local level the congregation reaches out to the community with a Holiday Bible Club (currently suspended during the vacancy), opening the church in July and August, participation in the Charles Wood Summer School as well as the Fodens Summer School, William Kennedy Piping Festival, and European Heritage.

Our hall is used twice weekly by Armagh Child Contact centre.

During 2023 we celebrated our 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary with various events. Our main event was a Festival of Creative Displays entitled 350 Years in Scripture, Stitches and Stone from Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> May – Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> May. This also included a comprehensive Music program with at least 25 recitals over the period.

The 6<sup>th</sup> May also saw the coronation of King Charles III. During 2023 collections were made for Presbyterian and external charities.

## **FIRST ARMAGH CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND**

### **TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)**

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 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, 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.

The congregation also contributes to the denominations annual World Development Appeal, Sunday School project and any other special appeals.

### **Presbytery**

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

### **General Assembly**

Two 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.

### **Organisations**

Each Thursday our hall is used by Rainbow Guides, Brownies and Guides.

- Sunday School meets weekly from 10.15am to 11.30am where children up to 15 years old enjoy a varied program of Christian education.

Each Sunday Evening young people attend the youth fellowship where games are played, discussion stimulated, and fellowship encouraged.

- Bowling Club meets once a week on Monday nights.
- The Presbyterian Women meet monthly from September to March. They enjoy fellowship, stimulation, and reflection on Christian themes.
- The Tuesday Club meets fortnightly from September to March. It provides opportunities for mostly retired people to be connected to what is going on in the church as well as the local and wider community.
- The Reading Group - meets 4 times a year to discuss and reflect upon a book.
- Girl Guides, Brownies and Rainbow Guides meet weekly on Thursday evenings. This enables them to develop self-confidence, build friendships, learn new things and have fun as they work with arts and crafts, play games and develop their gifts.

- The Choir meets weekly to practice for leading worship.
- The Praise band leads worship generally on a monthly basis. They usually practice before morning worship.
- The walking group meets every Monday evening at 7pm to enjoy a walk around the city
- Junior Church meets weekly during the service. Children have an opportunity to play, create and learn together.

## **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.

## **FIRST ARMAGH CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)**

### **PUBLIC BENEFIT STATEMENT**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**First Armagh 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. There were 177 contributing families during 2023 (2022 – 178) donating a total of £107,369 through recorded giving (2022 - £106,414). Reclaim of tax on donations through the Government's Gift Aid scheme is also a significant source of income for the congregation with £22,945 reclaimed in 2023 (2022 - £22,983). Total Income of the congregation during the year was £136,649. Total expenditure for the year was £80,596.

The income received less expenditure incurred, as noted above, resulted in net receipts for 2023 of £56,054 (2022 – Net receipts of £29,708) with funds carried forward at 31 December 2023 of £413,961 (2022 - £367,426).

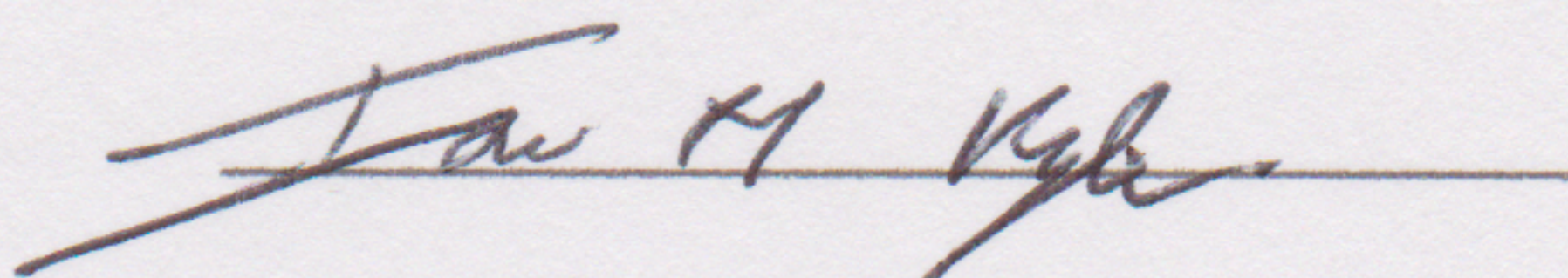
**STATEMENT OF TRUSTEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

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) 2008 to prepare a receipts and payment account and a statement of assets and liabilities.

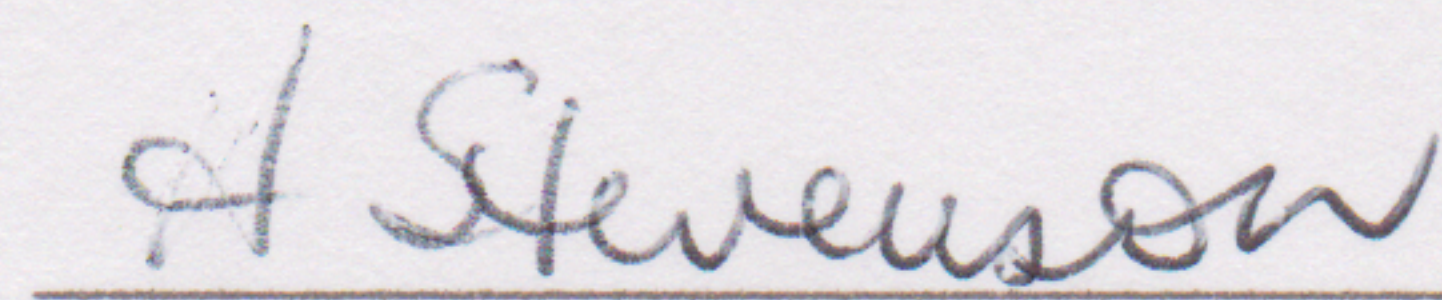
The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the congregation's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time its financial position. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the congregation and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by the Kirk Session at a meeting on 28 April 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



Trustee

Date: 28 April 2024



Trustee

Date: 28 April 2024