

Mourne Congregation Of The Presbyterian Church In Ireland

Trustees' Annual Report

Year ended 31 December 2023

The trustees present their report and the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Reference and administrative details

Registered charity name	Mourne Congregation Of The Presbyterian Church In Ireland
Charity registration number	NIC105010
Principal office	Greencastle Street Kilkeel Co Down BT34 4BH

The trustees

Rev William Bingham
Archie Alderdice
Ivan Annett
Ronald Annett
William Annett
David Baird
Doreen Bartholomew
Gary Bingham
Jackie Blue
Jim Chestnutt
Edward Forsythe
W A Grills
Roy Hanna
J W Hanna
R J Hanna
James Henderson
Rodney McBride
Sidney McKee
Joseph McKibbin
Martin McKee
David Morris
James Morris
Eric Niblock
Gregory Nicholson
Robert Patterson
Thomas Patterson
Alan Skillen
Eric Skillen
James Stevenson
Brian Townley
William Turner
Stanley Annett
Gary Glenny
Raymond McKee
Maurice Skillen
James Stevenson

Company secretary	William Turner
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Mourne Congregation Of The Presbyterian Church In Ireland

Trustees' Annual Report *(continued)*

Year ended 31 December 2023

Auditor	UHY Hacker Young Fitch Limited Chartered accountants & statutory auditor 27-29 Gordon Street Mews Gordon Street Belfast BT1 2LG
Bankers	Danske Bank 58 Hill Street NEWRY Co Down BT34 1AR
Solicitors	Fisher & Fisher 1 Newry St Rathfriland, Newry Co Down BT34 5PY

Structure, governance 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 congregations. All members are entitled to propose, speak and exercise equal votes at meetings, except that the Moderator and the ministers in active duty in the congregation, have no deliberative but only a casting vote.

Stated meetings of the Kirk session are held at least three times in each year or as appropriate. Exceptional meetings were held during the year to deal with issues around church activities and Covid 19 restrictions.

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 by vote either by the congregation or by the Kirk Session. Members are elected if they obtain two-thirds of the vote.

Presbytery

Under the Presbyterian Church in Ireland form of governance, the corporate oversight of a congregation is the responsibility of a Presbytery which superintends generally the spiritual and temporal affairs of the congregations assigned to it by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Mourne Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the Presbytery of Newry within 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.

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Trustees' Annual Report *(continued)*

Year ended 31 December 2023

Structure, governance and management *(continued)*

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, administrative 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

Mourne 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 are by the grace of God, to help people of all ages become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. Our vision is, by the grace of God, to be an inclusive, welcoming community of Christ's people of all ages, which:

- is increasingly characterised by love for God, and love and concern for others;
- is committed to the historic Christian gospel as revealed in the Bible;
- is relevant to people of this time and place.

The congregation aims to live out its Mission and Vision as a family of God's people by being:

- A Covenant Community: where our relationships are rooted in the promises of God by living faithfully toward him and toward one another.
- An Intergenerational Community: where adults intentionally take the lead to engage with, encourage and nurture younger members to maturity in Christ.
- An Outward looking Community: where we want the blessings of God that belong to us in the gospel to become blessings for others beyond the bounds of our community.
- As a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, we believe that the Bible is the supreme authority over all we do, and that the Westminster Confession of Faith, along with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms set out what we understand the Bible teaches on key matters of Christian faith and practice.

Mourne Congregation Of The Presbyterian Church In Ireland

Trustees' Annual Report *(continued)*

Year ended 31 December 2023

Objectives and activities

The congregation meets for worship every Sunday and visitors are welcome to join. The Sacrament of the Lords 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 bible study and prayer meetings and has a wide range of organisations including;

- Sunday School
 - Bible Classes
 - Midweek Fellowship Group
 - Crèches
 - Children's Church
 - Sunday Knight Kids
 - Youth Fellowship Groups
 - Small Group Meetings
 - Boys Brigade
 - Girls Brigade
 - Presbyterian Women
 - Mens Fellowship
 - Badminton Club
 - Youth Club
 - Mothers and Toddlers
 - Walking Group
 - Ladies Bible Study Group
- covering all spiritual and operational matters.

Achievements and performance

Worship and prayer

The congregation met for worship each Sunday at 11.30am and 7.00pm. During the week the Bible Study provided an opportunity for members to meet for fellowship, to study the scriptures and for a time of prayer. Live Broadcast services on Sunday mornings and evenings were available online with an average online viewing of 1,750 for the morning and 800 for the evening services. The Trustees acknowledge and thank the Media Team for their dedication and expertise in providing this service. The midweek prayer meeting and bible study was held on Thursday evenings with an average attendance of 70 people. Full members classes were held in the Spring 24 people were admitted to The Lord's Table for the first time and 4 persons were received on transfer from other congregations. There were 15 infant baptisms and infant dedications, 5 adult baptisms, 10 weddings and 34 funeral services. At 31 December 2023 there were 595 communicant members and 1,004 families connected with the congregation. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was served at evening worship in January and morning worship in May and November. The average weekly attendance at worship was 770 in the morning and 370 in the evening. The Trustees are very grateful to the 180 Band, Organist, Praise Band, musicians and choir who led worship throughout the year. Many have been blessed through their ministry. Monthly services also took place in Brackney Hall except for the summer months.

Mourne Congregation Of The Presbyterian Church In Ireland

Trustees' Annual Report *(continued)*

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Achievements and performance *(continued)*

Pastoral care

Members of the congregation who are unable to attend church due to sickness or age were visited by the minister, elders or by one of the congregation's pastoral visitors. Mr Ellis Hanna joined us as a Student Assistant part time.

Mission and outreach

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

The congregation also supports the work of the Student Christian Organisation of Malawi and various projects relating to the work of The David Gordon Memorial Hospital in Livingstonia, Malawi, with a particular focus on supporting the very poor and vulnerable members of the area.

The congregation supports various local charities including The Fishermen's Mission, The Southern Area Hospice, Child Evangelism Fellowship, Mourne Stimulus, Mission Aviation Fellowship, Belfast City Mission, Prison Fellowship, The Royal British Legion, The RNLI and The Presbyterian Children's Society. The congregation also supports, both financially and prayerfully, members of our fellowship who decide to do short or long-term service with mission focused organisations. Members who undertake study to prepare them for service both at home and overseas also receive support from the congregation.

Presbytery

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

General Assembly

The minister and two of our elders were nominated to attend the meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The General Assembly of 2023 was held in June.

Property

During 2023 the inside of the Meeting House was painted and general maintenance was provided.

Organisations -

Sunday School and Bible Classes met on Sunday mornings with an average attendance of over 250.

Sunday Knight Kids met monthly with an average attendance of 30.

Baby and Children's Crèche were held each Sunday morning. Attendance varied.

The Youth Fellowship groups met in the halls each Sunday evening with a combined average attendance of 120. The Girls' Brigade met on Tuesday evenings with a varied programme of games, crafts, cooking and Bible Study. No parents' evening was held this year but the GB organised a Christmas concert for parents. There are around 200 members plus officers and helpers.

The Mother and Toddler Group met on Wednesday mornings from 9.30am to 11.00am. Over 75 children are registered as members from throughout the community.

The Boys Brigade met on Wednesday evenings with a varied programme of sports, crafts games and bible study. No Parents evening was held March. There are around 200 members plus leaders and helpers.

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Trustees' Annual Report *(continued)*

Year ended 31 December 2023

Achievements and performance *(continued)*

The Badminton Club met on Wednesday evenings.

The Presbyterian Women's Group met on the 1st and 3rd Monday of each month and held a Presbyterian Women's Service in March.

The Men's Fellowship met two times each month from September to May.

English Classes for people from other countries living in our community were held this year on a Monday evening.

The Saturday Club met from January to March and September to December.

Small group Bible studies were held in the church halls throughout the year.

The Walking Club organised a several walks this year.

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. They also thank our caretakers for the excellent work in cleaning and maintaining the church properties.

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). A team of volunteers was also established to do messages for those living in isolation during the period of Lockdown.

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 via informal, 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.

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Financial review

The congregation's main source of income is members' contributions through the Weekly Freewill Offering. There were 701 (2022 - 703) contributors during the year, donating a total of £259,198 (2022- £239,462).

Total income during the year was £569,271, compared to £567,881 in the previous year.

Total expenditure for the year amounted to £533,604 (2022 - £498,650). The increase in costs was due to the increase in organisational and general activity.

Net income recorded totalled £37,230 (2022 - £66,487).

Going Concern

The activities of the congregation are dependent on ongoing contributions from its members. The Trustees are of the opinion that the congregation has sufficient resources at the date of approval of these financial statements to meet commitments which will arise in the year from the date of signing this report and subject to the continuing support from members to fund on an ongoing basis the congregation's current activities and other financial commitments.

Reserves Policy

The Trustees have considered the level of unrestricted reserves that is appropriate to hold, taking account of current and ongoing commitments. It is the policy of the Trustees to hold at least three month's normal expenditure. At the year-end unrestricted reserves were £841,673 (2022 - £785,420) which represents a higher level of reserves. The Trustees however, consider it prudent to hold reserves at this level as the funding of its present activities is dependent on the ongoing financial support of members.

Risk Review

A review of major risks has been undertaken by the Trustees and systems and procedures implemented to manage identified risks. The principal risks are in relation to the likelihood of reputational damage and financial risks associated with the expectation of ongoing financial support from members. These risks are mitigated by the Trustees, and the Congregational Committee, regularly monitoring of the various activities of the congregation at stated meetings and by encouraging members in their regular giving.

Trustees' responsibilities statement

The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in Northern Ireland requires the charity trustees to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources, of the charity for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the applicable Charities SORP;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;

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- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees' annual report was approved on 23/5/24 and signed on behalf of the board of trustees by:

W. Bingham
Rev William Bingham
Trustee

W. N. Turner
William Turner
Trustee