

REGENT STREET 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 (NIC105068)

REGENT STREET 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 including a Balance Sheet as at that date.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Regent Street Congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
48A Regent Street, Newtownards, BT23 4LP

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC105068)

CHARITY TRUSTEES

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

Mr. Norman Armstrong	Mr. John Joseph Alexander Bell
Mr. Roy Brown	Mr. Andrew John Crawford
Mrs. Karen Elizabeth Glass	Mr. Harvey Hamilton
Mr. Ivan Logan Hamilton	Ms. Joan Catherine Hamilton
Mrs. Joan Hosford	Mr. William Hosford
Mr. Ian Macdonald	Mr. Ronald Martin
Mrs. Julie Sarah McClelland	Mrs. Anne Louise McConnell
Mr. Robert Malcolm McConnell	Mrs. Helen Moffett
Dr Gale Samuel John Moffett	Mr. Charles Robert Orr
Mr. Alex Palmer	Dr Michael Park
Mr. David John Thompson	Rev Anne Tolland

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TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)

PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS

Minister	Rev. Anne Tolland
Clerk of Session	Mr. Ian Macdonald
Treasurer	Mr. Andrew John Crawford

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Mr. William McAdam, Stanley Woods & Co, Alexander House, 49 / 51 Church Street,
Newtownards, BT23 4AN

BANKERS

Ulster Bank, 22 Frances Street, Newtownards, BT23 7DP

SOLICITORS

Russell & Co Solicitors, 11 Lower Mary Street, Newtownards, BT23 4JJ

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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 Session has delegated to its Congregational Committee the temporal affairs of the congregation including administering all funds and property belonging to the congregation. Members of the Kirk Session are ex-officio members of the Congregational Committee.

The Kirk Session consists of the ordained minister and the ruling elders of the congregation. All members are entitled to propose, speak and exercise equal votes at meetings, except that the Moderator, the ministers in active duty in the congregation, has no deliberative but only a casting vote.

Stated meetings of the Kirk Session are held at least twice, but more typically eight times each year. The Kirk Session met on twelve occasions during 2023, twice in February, October and December once in January, March, May, August, September and November.

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.

Presbytery

Under the Presbyterian Church in Ireland form of governance the corporate oversight of a congregation is the responsibility of a Presbytery which superintends the spiritual and temporal affairs of the congregations assigned to it by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Regent Street congregation of the Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the Ards Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The membership of the Presbytery consists 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.

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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 during June for worship and to conduct its business. At the end of business, it is dissolved. The membership of the General Assembly consists 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.

Regent Street 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 purpose is by the grace of God, to be a welcoming community of Christ's people who are "Living and Sharing God's Good News".

The congregation aims to live out its Mission 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.

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TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)

ACTIVITIES AND OBJECTIVES

The congregation meets for worship every Sunday and visitors are always welcome to join. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is typically observed on five occasions during the year and all those who have been baptized and who have made a profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, are admitted to the Lord's Supper. During 2023 we observed the Sacrament of the Lords Supper on three occasions.

At present we conduct only one worship service each Sunday, it is hoped we will develop opportunities for more assorted styles of worship in the future.

The congregation has held a number of more informal services in previous years to try and reach out to families and individuals who are less comfortable with a more traditional Sunday morning service.

The congregation has a wide range of organisations including:

- Sunday School (Beginners and Senior)
- Crèche
- Bible Class (known as "Quest")
- Various youth groups
- Badminton Club
- Thursday Club (Senior citizens)
- First Friends (Mothers and babies)
- Bowling Club
- Regent Ramblers (walking group)
- Knit and Natter Group
- Bible Study Group

The congregation also allows its premises to be used for a number of young people's organisations administered and run by the Scout and Guiding Associations.

We have a history of community involvement and are more than happy to make the premises available for the use of local organisations.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Worship and prayer.

The congregation meets for worship each Sunday at 11 am.

In addition, Christian education programs take place on a regular basis.

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TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)

Prayer is an intrinsic part of church life, and time is set aside prior to the Sunday morning service each week and again on Monday lunchtime to focus on this aspect of our witness. There is also a successful program known as the Prayer Tree which allows members of the congregation to ask for specific prayers and a resolute team of individuals will carryout these requests.

There were no marriage or baptism services during 2023.

Regretfully we did lose a few members during the year, and we found ourselves giving our grateful thanks to God for their faithful service to our congregation and the wider world.

On 31 December 2023 there were 238 communicant members and 291 families connected with the congregation. The average weekly attendance at Sunday morning worship is 130.

Pastoral care

All members of the congregation are visited on a regular basis by the minister and elders. With particular emphasis on those who are unable to attend church due to sickness or age and those in hospital and nursing homes.

There is also a 'CD' ministry where recordings of services are distributed to those members of the congregation who are unable to regularly attend services. This service is also available to family and friends of the funeral service of those who have passed away. It is our intention to reestablish our regular weekly live streaming of Sunday services which have proven very popular during Covid restrictions.

Mission and outreach

The congregation supports several charitable programs and agencies, both financially and in more practical ways.

Locally the congregation continues to support the work of The Link Family and Community Centre.

There is also an ongoing collection for a local food bank, which the congregation supported generously in 2023.

The 'welcome' area at the front of the church (known as the 'Hub') is open for tea, coffee and a chat. It is open to ALL members of the public, regardless of whether they belong to our congregation, a different church, or have no church affiliation

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TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)

whatsoever. The Hub is also used on Sunday mornings serving refreshments to members of the congregation prior to the service.

A highly successful 'Holiday Bible Club' and 'Easter Outreach Scheme' were held during the year.

Overseas missions were supported in a number of ways. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland's United Appeal is the congregation's core method for financially supporting the work of the church overseas.

The congregation also generously supported a number of other charities:

Christian Aid: In 2023 for the first time in a number of years a joint Christian Aid Service was held with our neighbours in Regent Street Methodist Church. This proved to be highly successful, and the intention of both churches would be to make this a regular annual event. Members of the congregation were also very generous financially in their support of Christian Aids emergency appeals throughout the year.

Samaritan's Purse: This is a Sunday school led project, but which is supported by the whole congregation. It involves filling wrapped shoe boxes with small gifts of toys, sweets, toiletries and knitted items, which are then transported to disadvantaged children, in Eastern Europe and Africa.

In 2023 some 130 shoe boxes were filled and supplied to our local collection partner, along with a cheque for £650 towards helping with their distribution costs.

Brown Money Collection: This is another Sunday School led project where members of the congregation are encouraged to donate any spare 'brown and silver' coins. A total of £742 was donated to the NSPCC.

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 outreach 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 congregations in the areas of worship, discipleship, global mission, outreach, leadership and pastoral care.

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TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)

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 minister and 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, nominated by Kirk Session, attend the meetings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland held in Assembly Buildings, Belfast. In 2023 the General Assembly met from Wednesday 21st June to Saturday 24th June.

Property

During 2023 there was only the general maintenance requirements with no major building or renovation work required.

Organisations.

While the following section describes the organisations that the trustees are proud to support, once again they spent most of 2023 continuing to build on the good work of the previous year. This continued demanding work has shown an overall increase in numbers attending all organisations and continues to grow. As a result, data regarding attendance was not gathered and this was deemed inconsequential.

Sunday School.

The Sunday school meets after the children's address at each morning service, then the young people exit to their classes. The Sunday school provides a Christian education to the younger children in the congregation. There are currently two age groupings —

- a) Beginners (P1-P3)
- b) Senior (P4-P7)

Crèche.

A crèche service is provided each Sunday morning for any babies and toddlers.

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Quest.

Quest meets each Sunday morning. This is for young people from Year 8 to Year 14 and explores the benefits and responsibilities of having a Christian life centered on being part of a church family.

Badminton Club

The badminton club is for over eighteens, and meets each Monday evening for some exercise, coaching, and fellowship.

Choir

The choir meets on a Wednesday evening to prepare for Sunday services and other special events during the year.

Bowling Club

The bowling club meets each Thursday evening for friendship and a bit of friendly competition.

Thursday Club

The Thursday Club is for our more senior members to enjoy a chat, some refreshments, and various activities (talks, quizzes etc.). The club meets every 2 weeks.

First Friends

First Friends is our baby/toddler's group that meets on alternate Fridays from 10.30am until 12 noon. Mums, dads, grandparents and other carers are also more than welcome.

Regent Ramblers

This is the congregation's walking group. There is typically one walk organised each month, apart from July and August.

Bible Study

A very well attended Bible study group, lead by the Minister meets on alternate Wednesday evenings.

Volunteers

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TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)

The Trustees wish to acknowledge their deep appreciation of all those who give freely of their time by serving on committees, helping with organisations, outreach initiatives, 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 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).

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 all cases. Public access is made known using 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 because of their holding office or employment. However, this is incidental

and necessary 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.

REGENT STREET CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)

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 171 contributing families during the year (182 in the previous year, 2022) donating a total of £92,751 (£82,665 in the previous year, 2022).

As the total income of the congregation in 2020 was more than £250,000 the congregation had to prepare its accounts on an accrual's basis, in line with the provisions in The Charities Accounts and Reports Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015. The same basis is still followed.

Total Income of the congregation during the year was £211,476 compared to £216,148 in the previous year.

Total expenditure during the year was £184,193, compared to £479,941 in the previous year.

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

RESPONSIBILITIES IN RESPECT OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

The Trustees are required to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the congregation and the financial activities for that year. In preparing the financial statements the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Funds will continue in operation.

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TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the funds transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the congregation and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Statement of Recommended Practice "Accounting and Reporting by Charities (1 January 2015)". 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.

For the year ended 31 December 2023.

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.

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 the various activities of the congregation at stated meetings and by encouraging members in their regular giving.

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TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)

Approved by the Kirk Session at a meeting on 6th May 2024 and signed on its behalf by

Rev Anne Tolland (Minister)

Signature: *Anne Tolland*

Date *6/5/2024*

Mr. Ian Macdonald (Clerk of Session)

Signature: *I Macdonald*

Date *6/5/2024*