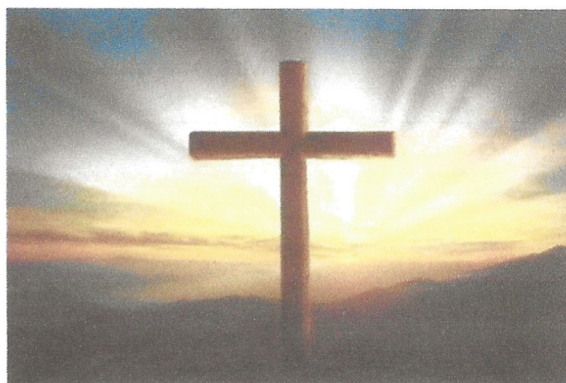


**FIRST DROMORE  
CONGREGATION OF THE  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN  
IRELAND**



**Trustees Annual Report and Financial  
Statements for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup>  
December 2023**



**Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC105072)**

**FIRST DROMORE 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 Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at that date.

**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS**

First Dromore congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

**3 Diamond Rd**

**Dromore**

**BT25 1PQ**

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC105072)

**CHARITY TRUSTEES**

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

Rev Dr Keith McIlroy (Chairperson) Dr Harold Samuel Gamble Mr. Samuel Alan Poots Miss Margaret Black McGrehan Mr Trevor Poots	Mr. William John Wilkinson Mr. David Leslie Cassells Mr. Samuel Rowland Patterson MSc Mr. Jim Cochrane
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**PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS**

Minister	Rev Dr Keith McIlroy
Clerk of Session	Mr. William John Wilkinson
Congregational Treasurer	Mr. Samuel Alan Poots
Congregational Secretary	Mrs Jane McBratney

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER**

Ivan Shannon & Co Accountants  
39 Church Street  
Ballynahinch  
Co Down  
BT24 8AF

**BANKERS**

Ulster Bank Ltd  
18 Bow Street  
Lisburn  
Co Antrim  
BT28 1BN

**SOLICITORS**

John Elliott Solicitors  
40 Linenhall Street  
Belfast  
BT2 8BA

## **FIRST DROMORE 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 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 once a month and at other such times for other purposes as deemed appropriate by the code.

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 generally the spiritual and temporal affairs of the congregations assigned to it by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. First Dromore congregation of the Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the Dromore Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The membership of the Presbytery consists mainly of the active ministers of congregations assigned to it by the General Assembly, ministers who have retired from active duty and an elder appointed by the Kirk Session of each congregation.

## **The General Assembly**

The General Assembly is the supreme court of the Church representing in one body the whole Church and acting as its supreme legislative, administration and judicial authority, in dealing with all matters brought before it. The General Assembly is normally constituted during the first week in June for worship and to conduct its business. At the end of business it is dissolved. The membership of the General Assembly consists mainly of the active ministers of each congregation, retired ministers and a representative elder appointed by the Kirk Session of each congregation.

### **DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE**

The charitable purpose of the congregation is the advancement of religion.

First Dromore Church 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 by the grace of God, to help people of all ages become fully devoted disciples 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 and have a passion for reaching and building up the next generation;
- 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.

## **Vacancy**

Early in January 2023 the Rev. J. McKane received and accepted a call from New Row Presbyterian Church Coleraine. The Session, Church committee and congregation congratulated him on his call and wished God's richest blessing upon him and his wife and young family, as he took up this charge.

In due course the Dromore Presbytery placed Rev A Faulkner in charge of the vacancy commission to oversee the choice of a new minister. The Linkage Commission in Church House after hearing the case put by FDPC, agreed in June that we should proceed and seek out a person of God's choice to pastor the people in First Dromore.

After prayerful consideration session decided to call 4 persons for interview – in fact 3 attended. Thereafter session made a list of one to preach on a stated Sunday morning - 8<sup>th</sup> October 2023. On the following Monday evening a congregational meeting was called and in the presence of the Vacancy Commission the Rev Dr. K McIroy received a unanimous call on the first vote. FDPC were delighted to ordain and install Rev. Dr. McIroy on December 15<sup>th</sup> 2023.

## **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 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/prayer meetings and has a wide range of organisations including:

- Sunday School & Bible Class
- Kidszone
- Creche
- Girls Brigade
- POPS (Parents of Pre School)
- Badminton Club
- Boys Brigade
- Friendship Group
- Young Adults – Lighthouse Group
- Presbyterian Women
- Men's Discipleship Group
- Bowls and Table tennis
- Coffee and chat mornings

## **ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

### **Worship and prayer**

The congregation normally meets for worship each Sunday at 11.30am and 6.00pm. We celebrated communion on 6 occasions. We were also glad to be able to renew fellowship

with our Methodist friends on Good Friday for a special communion service. This is usually reciprocated on Christmas morning in the Methodist building.

Evening services have taken various formats and have sought to include participation from members of the congregation. This year -2023 - the format generally followed was - Elder led service; This is my story; Praise Service; and a Missionary focus evening.

A midweek meeting on 2nd and 4th Wednesday provided an opportunity for members to meet together for fellowship, to study the scriptures and for a time of prayer. This year we studied a variety of topics including "Jesus as Prophet, Priest and King", the Christian and Culture as well as a series on Daniel.

In December the church leadership organised and delivered a series of Christmas events open to the Dromore Community. These events included: Christmas with the Elders; A Messy Church led principally by 3 young leaders and supported by other young parents; A School Christmas Carol service at which the session clerk spoke; a Church Fellowship Carol Service.

As well as our regular services during the year we acknowledged God's gift of new life through the Sacraments of Baptism. There were 5 Infant baptisms. . We conducted one marriage service. There were also 15 funeral thanksgiving services and sought to comfort those who had been bereaved during the year.

At 31 December 2023 there were 160 communicant members and 204 families connected with the congregation. In normal circumstances, the average weekly attendance at morning worship is 173.

### **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 and other volunteers. Recordings of our morning services were produced weekly and made available on a Phonline and YouTube to those who are no longer able to get out to worship due to infirmity or on request.

The Social Engagement Team prepared baby gifts for families who had babies in 2023 and these were delivered by the minister.

A Coffee Morning with an attendance of approximately 30 people is held on 1st and 3rd Thursdays providing a warm space for food, friendship, and fellowship.

At Christmas 2023 a Christmas pack was made available to all families associated with the congregation and delivered by their district elder.

## **Mission and outreach**

Prayer letters and other information from a range of relevant mission organisation and individuals are distributed throughout the congregation via a weekly email.

From time to time visiting speakers attend worship and they spoke about their areas of mission in 2023. In addition we heard about the work of Dromore Youth for Christ (who we financially support monthly) International Justice Mission, Open Doors Scripture Union and European Mission fellowship. This year the congregation continued to develop a church partnership, facilitated by EMF, with Pastor Mihai Chisari and Imagio Dei Baptist Church Christ whom we support financially.

Several members of the congregation serve on the Board of Governors of Dromore Central Primary, Dromore High School and the Board of Youth for Christ and the Board of Ballynahinch Counselling Services.

During the early summer the congregation organised a Holiday Bible Club (attended by approx. 70 young people). This event had a range of activities including singing, games, memory verses, crafts, stories from the Bible and a final night BBQ for children and their parents.

In the Spring a series of 4 exploring church membership classes were held to help introduce interested individuals to the basics of the Christian faith, the distinctive of Presbyterianism and the responsibilities and privileges of church membership.

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 that which 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. Our contribution to this fund in 2023 was £8554.

The congregation supported the work of the Presbytery Stand at the Balmoral show financially and prayerfully. Members of the congregation also served on the stand during the show.

On the third Sunday in October the Congregation welcomed the BB and GB to a joint annual enrolment service. The purpose of this service was to encourage and inspire those in leadership in these organisations and assure them of our thoughts, prayers and support.

The congregation also contributed to the denomination's annual World Development Appeal to the sum of £400. Other special appeals are prayerfully and financially supported.

## **Presbytery**

The congregation was represented at meetings of Dromore Presbytery by our minister and one of the elders. This provides an important link between the congregations and the wider structures of the church. Significant issues are duly brought to the attention of session members.

## **General Assembly**

The Minister and one of the elders was nominated to attend the meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland held in Assembly Buildings, Belfast.

## **Property**

The Congregational Committee continue to provide oversight and maintenance of our suite of buildings, manse, and graveyard. During 2023 part of the main church building was rewired at a cost of £21,914. The Manse was redecorated throughout and necessary repairs undertaken during the vacancy.

## **Organisations**

### **Sunday School**

Children attending Sunday school took part in activities such as listening to Bible stories, played games and quizzes, and learnt songs. We had an outing to Infinity adventure and the secondary age group had an outing to play mini golf. On Children's Day, the children took part in the church service and received gifts.

### **Bowls**

Social bowls are played in the church hall on the second and fourth Tuesday morning in the month from September to March. Approximately 16 male and female meet on a regular basis.

### **Badminton**

The church hall is open for badminton on Friday evenings during the months of September to April. It is open to all ages over 11 years. Table tennis is available for younger family members and those not on the badminton court. An average number of 12 out of 20 members attend each evening.

## **Boys Brigade**

Boys Brigade meets each Thursday night with 134 Boys registered. Activities scheduled and delivered included... Scripture Memory Verses; Baking; Camping; Crafts; Singing; Music (drums); Football; Basketball; Gaga Ball; Stool Ball; Volleyball; Board Games; Horsebox; Mat work; Christmas Party; Let's Go Hydro; Airsoft; Circuit Training; Art; BB Enrolment; Remembrance Sunday; Competitions entered... CS - Dodgeball CS - Volleyball CS - Outdoor Football CS - Table tennis CS - Music BBNI Competition Seniors - Outdoor Football Seniors - Badminton Seniors - Table Tennis Seniors - Music BBNI competition Juniors - 5-aside Indoor Football Juniors - Unihoc Juniors - Quiz Juniors - Dodgeball Juniors - BBNI Music Competition.

## **Coffee and Chat Morning**

Throughout 2023 approximately 20-40 adults met every two weeks through Jan – December. This gave people an opportunity to meet socially and develop friendships. This organisation caters for people within and without the church family.

## **Church Choir**

The church choir comprises 20 men and women who meet regularly on a Thursday night for practice. The choir leads worship on a Sunday morning under the direction of the church organist.

## **Kidszone**

This group meets each Sunday morning during worship to provide instruction for young people between 4-11 on the Bible. Approximately 20-30 young people attend under the guidance of 14 helpers.

## **Creche**

Creche is available for babies and toddlers during Sunday morning worship.

## **Lighthouse**

This is a group of young people between 25-40 years of age who meet to develop their faith and for social reasons. They meet monthly.

## **Friendship Group**

The group met on the fourth Wednesday afternoon of each month with a break during the summer. Although the group is open to all ages, the membership of between 30-35 adults are mainly in the older age range and are drawn from First Dromore and other congregations. Afternoon tea is provided. There was a varied programme of Christian and secular speakers during the year. A Christmas lunch with Carol singing and gifts was held in December. Items of toiletries, stationery etc were collected by members throughout the

year and forwarded to the Mission to Seamen, Belfast. Copies of 'Our Daily Bread' were made available to members.

### **Men's Discipleship**

A group of 12-15 men met once a month to discuss a book relating to how real-life issues interact and impact faith. These evenings provided the opportunity for good intergenerational discussion and fellowship.

### **Presbyterian Women**

A new committee was elected in March 2023. PW meets on the first Monday of each month from October to April. Presently there are 35 members. During the year PW focused on a variety of themes but central to all our thinking was Jesus and 'Going deeper together'. A special effort in 2023 was to increase the age range of the membership and to involve members in the delivery of the programme. A PW dinner was held for members and friends. Some members attended the PW annual conference in Church House. From September 2023 the theme for PW was 'Being Transformed'.

### **POPS**

On Wednesday mornings approximately 20 Adults and 25 babies and pre-school children gather in our main hall for friendship and play. The children are provided with a healthy snack and parents offered tea and scones. There is also some singing and rhyme time. These mornings have proven to be an invaluable source of support to new and experienced mums and carers especially post pandemic.

### **Girls Brigade**

Girls Brigade meet each Tuesday night with 40 girls registered. A range of activities are provided for the girls.

### **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.

## **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).

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 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 Commission's Public benefit requirement statutory guidance.

## **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

The congregation's main source of income is members' contributions through the Weekly Freewill Offering. There were 155 contributing families during the year [164 in 2022] donating a total of £136,901 (a 12.5% increase on receipts of £121,715 in 2022). The number of contributing families decreased in 2022 due to bereavement. The number of families opting for bank standing order facility continued in 2023.

The total Income of the congregation during the year was £199,090 (including organisations) compared to £291,478 in the previous year. A bequest in 2022 of £121,998 is the main reason for the reduction in total income in 2023.

Total expenditure of unrestricted funds (including organisations) decreased only slightly from £180,029 in 2022 to £179,818 in 2023. There have been various movements in this expenditure. The largest movement was a decrease of £19k for ministry costs due to our Minister leaving at the end of March. Utility costs in particular heating and lighting remained high throughout the year. Property expenditure increased by 64% compared with 2022 due to the cost of rewiring part of the main church building.

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 commitments.

## **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 28<sup>th</sup> May 2024 and signed on its behalf by

Name Mr William John Wilkinson

Handwritten signature of Mr William John Wilkinson in black ink.

Date 28<sup>th</sup> May 2024

Name Mr Alan Poots

Handwritten signature of Mr Alan Poots in black ink.

Date 28th May 2024