

**DOWNPATRICK 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(NIC105125)

DOWNPATRICK CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

The Trustees present their Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2023 including a Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at that date.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

DOWNPATRICK congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
Fountain Street, Downpatrick, BT30 6AW

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC105125)

CHARITY TRUSTEES

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

Rev. O. Patterson
Mr R. Shields
Mrs E. Storey

Miss A. Chestnutt
Mr R. Martin
Mr. B. Redhead

PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS

Minister	Rev. O. Patterson
Clerk of Session	Miss A. Chestnutt
Treasurer	Miss B. Reid

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

**Mr Norman Elliott FCA, Norman Elliott Chartered Accountants, 13, English Street,
Downpatrick, BT30 6 AB**

BANKERS

Ulster Bank Ltd., 2/8 Market St., Downpatrick. BT30 6BU

SOLICITORS

J. Murland and Co., 15, English St., Downpatrick BT30 6AP

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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 congregations. All members are entitled to propose, speak and exercise equal votes at meetings, except that the Moderator, the minister 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 in each year or as appropriate.

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. Downpatrick congregation of the Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the Down 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.

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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 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.

Downpatrick 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.

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, sets out what we understand the Bible to teach on matters of Christian faith and practice.

The Congregation's mission is: - by the grace of God, to see Christ's kingdom grow in the lives of men, women and children. It is our desire to fulfil Christ's great commission of Matthew 28:19 to see people of all ages and backgrounds becoming fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

1. We desire that people will clearly understand Jesus' message of salvation.
2. We desire that those who grasp that message will grow in their love, devotion and service to Jesus.

The Congregation aims to live out its mission and vision as a family of God's people by being:-

- a Bible centred community, living lives that are based on God's Word and seeking to please Him in all we do.
- an outward looking community that seeks to reach out and welcome people from every background and that seeks to share the Good News of Jesus Christ by our words, welcome and actions.

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- at the centre of our local community by being part of it and being relevant in the issues and problems that we seek to help change

ACTIVITIES AND OBJECTIVES

The congregation meets for worship every Sunday and visitors are welcome to join. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is observed on five occasions during the year and all those who know the Lord and are walking in fellowship with Him are admitted to the Lord's Supper. The congregation holds regular Bible study meetings and has a range of organisations including:-

- Sunday School
- Creche
- Junior and Senior Youth Clubs
- Mothers and Toddlers
- Presbyterian Women
- Men's Fellowship

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Worship and Prayer

The congregation normally meets for worship each Sunday at 11.30 am. At regular intervals there is a Bible Study which provides an opportunity for members to meet together for fellowship and to study the Scriptures. There is a weekly prayer time where members meet together to pray for the needs of the congregation and the wider world.

While livestreaming of Sunday services was a product of the Covid Pandemic, we continue to do this. It is watched by many people each week, most of whom are non-members. It has been through this that several people have joined us for worship on a Sunday.

At 31st December, 2023, there were 83 Communicant members and 97 families connected with the congregation. The average attendance at Sunday worship was 78 people. There were no baptisms or marriages and 2 deaths.

Pastoral care

Members of the congregation who are unable to attend church due to sickness or age are normally visited on a regular basis by the minister and elders. Those who have been bereaved are also provided with support and prayer

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Mission and outreach

Outreach is very important to us as a congregation and the Lord has provided many opportunities for us to reach out into the community with the good news of Jesus Christ.

At a local level the congregation organises and provides the base for the community foodbank. While this is staffed by members from all churches, the co-ordinator is a member of the church committee and the trustees are the elders. The use of this has increased with an average of 30 parcels distributed per week. A special effort is made at Christmas to distribute a large number of food hampers.

A major form of outreach is the annual Holiday Bible Club which was able to take place for the first time since the Covid Pandemic. An average of 40 children attended each day. They learned about God and his love for us through Bible stories, games, drama and craft. Children of all faiths and none came to this and it is a vital outreach into the local community with the good news of the gospel. It was widely publicised through notice boards, social media, Church website and invitations to local housing estates.

The church was full for the annual Carol service and was once again attended by all sides of the Community.

The congregation's Facebook page continued to grow, reaching out to many in the local community and there were many encouraging messages from people around the world who have been helped by the teaching on the congregation's website.

The congregation seeks to support the local community through allowing use of its facilities and resources. The hall is used on a regular basis by such groups as Surestart, a Drama group for young people with special needs, Women's Institute, Barnardos, an Art society, a flower arranger's group and Men's Club.

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 contributes to the denomination's annual World Development

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Appeal, Sunday School project and any other special appeals.

Presbytery

The congregation was represented by our minister and one of the elders. It provides an important link between the congregations and the wider structures of the church.

General Assembly

The minister and one of our elders were nominated to attend the meeting of the General Assembly in June.

Property

Repairs were carried out on the church halls' chimney and the guttering on the halls replaced. Other minor works were carried out in order to maintain the fabric of the church, halls and manse.

Organisations

Sunday School, known as GLU is held every Sunday during the second half of morning worship. There is a small but enthusiastic group of 18 children. A Children's Day service took place in June and was followed by a picnic for all church members at Delamont Country Park.

Junior Youth Club meets every Saturday night and is for children of primary school age.

Senior Youth Club is attended by a small number of keen members and it is hoped to build on this.

Mothers and toddlers [Fountain Friends] continued to meet weekly and due to its popularity, numbers had to be limited to 40 children for safety reasons. This has always been a great opportunity to chat to people and to reach out into the community.

PW Connect meets monthly from September to April and provides an opportunity for fellowship for the ladies of the congregation by means of a varied programme. An average of 15 ladies attended. The annual PW service was held in April.

The congregation packed 186 boxes for the Operation Christmas Child Shoebox appeal.

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The Men's Fellowship attended the annual Men's Convention in Belfast.

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 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 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.

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TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The congregation's main source of income is members' contributions through the Weekly Freewill Offering. There were 67 contributors during the year 65 in previous year, donating a total of £ 50,420 compared to £ 51,380 in previous year, 2022

Total Income of the congregation during the year was £ 130,749, compared to £ 132,287 in the previous year.

Total expenditure decreased to £ 86,080 from £ 104,489, this year we had no major expenses.

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 [] and signed on its behalf by

[Name] 

[Name] 

[Date] 5-05-24

[Date] 5/5/24