

SPA CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

Trustees Annual Report for the year ended 31st December 2023

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC105196)

**SPA 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 at that date.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Spa Congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
68 Spa Road, Ballynahinch, Co. Down, BT24 8PT

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC105196)

CHARITY TRUSTEES

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

Mr Stephen James McBride
Mrs Minnie Evelyn Brown
Mr Wilfred Keys
Mr James Israel Rodgers

PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS

Convener: Rev. David Bingham
Clerk of Session: Mr Stephen James McBride
Treasurer: Mrs Susan Lorraine Bothwell

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Heanen Stanfield & McKee Ltd
30 Bachelors Walk
Lisburn
BT28 1XN

BANKERS

Dankse Bank Limited
P.O. Box 183
Donegall Square West
Belfast
BT1 6JS

SOLICITORS

J Murland & Co
Finlay House
15 English Street
Downpatrick
Co. Down
BT30 6AP

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TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (CONTINUED)

STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT

The Kirk Session

The charity trustees of the organisation 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 minister in active duty in the congregation, has no deliberative but only a casting vote.

Stated meetings of the Kirk Session are at least twice each year and normally every two months.

To be chosen for the office of eldership in the congregation a person must be a voting member and a regular attendant at its ordinances. The selection of those proposed to be called to the office is by the congregation. Members are elected after ratification by two thirds of the voting members present.

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 congregation assigned to it by the General Assembly. Spa Congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland has been assigned to 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 sessions of the congregations.

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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 the 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.

Spa Congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The Presbyterian Church 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 the world.

The Congregation's mission purpose is 'To Know Christ and Make Him Known'. Such that, by the grace of God 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.

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ACTIVITIES AND OBJECTIVES

The congregation meets for worship every Sunday at 10am and visitors are welcome to join us. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is observed three times per 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. Communion was held in January, May and November. A family service is held once a month.

The Congregation has a number of organisations which meet at various times through the week namely Kids for Christ, Crèche, Vibe, Youth Group, Boys' Brigade, Church Choir, Bible Study & Men for all Seasons.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Worship & Prayer

The church meets at 10 am on a Sunday morning and the service is also shown on Zoom for those who are unable to attend church.

Pastoral Care

The church at present although 'declared vacant' has a minister under the terms of PCI Linkage Commission. The minister is 'temporary stated supply'. Both he and the elders attend to the pastoral needs of the church.

Members of the congregation who are unable to attend church due to sickness or age are visited by a minister or elders. When requested, a Minister accompanied by an Elder will administer communion at the home of members who are unable to attend the Communion Service. When this is not possible, phone calls are made.

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Mission and Outreach

Our mid-week Bible study was held throughout the winter and autumn months and has seen an uptake of new members attending.

A special coronation lunch was held in May with the local children helping to decorate the hall for the event.

A Holiday Bible and Youth Week were held jointly with our sister church Magherahamlet Presbyterian followed by a BBQ for both congregations plus family and friends of children attending the Holiday Bible Club.

We held a church family outing in the summer to Hillsborough Forest park.

Car boot sales were held throughout the year to raise money to help with the running cost of the church hall.

Our Harvest Services took place in October and the choir from Spa Primary school joined us for a full to capacity church in the evening. Our evening service was attended by friends from Magherahamlet Presbyterian and Magherahamlet Parish churches followed by a time for fellowship in the Arnold Hall.

The Boys' Brigade Enrolment service took place in October again to a full church and the United carol service was held in December.

Our VIBE group organised 'Carols at the Crossroads' and sang to residents of the local nursing home and the church held a community Christingle Service on Christmas Eve.

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The Church continued to support a range of external missions and charities, including the Poppy Appeal, Christian Aid and Fields of Life as well as Charities of PCI.

The total amount donated to charities, including charities of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland was £7281.

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

The congregation also contributes to the denominations annual World Development Appeal, Christian Aid, Poppy Appeal, Presbyterian Children's Society and any other special appeals.

Presbytery

The congregation was represented at the regular meetings of Presbytery by our Convener and our Representative Elder, Mrs Evelyn Brown. This provides an important link between the congregations and the wider structure of the church.

Property

There were no major repairs required during the year with routine maintenance and servicing carried out as required by law.

Organisations

Our Boys' Brigade meets weekly and has a membership of 58 boys and 9 officers. A wide variety of activities took place during the year including crafts, cookery, Bible stories and sports. Several boys worked on their Duke of Edinburgh awards, while some of our officers also serve in the wider BB organisation.

Kids for Christ (KFC) meets on a Sunday morning for primary age children. The children leave the morning service after the second hymn for Bible stories and activities in the church hall. KFC join the congregation for a family service on the last Sunday of the month to take part in the service with singing and scripture readings. They had a children's day service at the end of June and received gifts for the year. KFC had their outing to Mount Panther Farm Park in September and was enjoyed by all.

Youth Group is for secondary school age and discusses a range of topics at their gatherings. They also take part in the family services leading the praise and doing scripture readings.

The Midweek Bible study group met during the year and alternated between Spa and Magherahamlet church halls.

The **Church Choir** leads the praise at special services such as Easter, Harvest and Christmas when appropriate anthems are sung.

VIBE is our Youth Fellowship which meets twice a month. The group aims to provide a forum for young people in the community to come together for food, fellowship and bible study. VIBE reached out to the local community hosting a Christmas 'Carols at the Crossroads' accompanied by Dunmore Silver Band.

Men For All Seasons is a joint group between Spa and Magherahamlet which meets four times a year, once per season. It is ministry for all men, fathers and sons of all ages to come together for some active outings planned around each season of the year. The group had four outings in 2023 to a history talk in Dromara and walks in Castlewellan Forest Park and along the Dundrum coast route..

The Church also offers facilities for a number of organisations: Spa Brownies & Rainbows; Spa Good News Club, Spa Primary School for concerts and P.E. classes; Magherahamlet Girls' Brigade hold their annual display in the church hall; Spa Young Farmers lease the Old School for their meetings.

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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 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 benefit as a result 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 the purpose are members, their families, other individuals that the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is in direct or 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 from the Weekly Freewill Offering. There were 87 contributors including several new families. Total income was £79005 (£73603 in 2022) and total expenditure £50023 (£44465 in 2022.) The reduced expenditure was a direct result of not having to pay a minister as the church became vacant on 1st January 2022 and receipt of a Covid Recovery grant.

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 receipts and payments 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 taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by the Kirk Session at a meeting on 19th June 2024 and signed on its behalf by

(signed) 

Name: Rev Alan Wilson

Date: 19.6.24

(signed) 

Name: STEPHEN MCBRIDE

Date: 19.6.24