

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT 2022

As we look back over 2022, we want to give thanks to the Lord for His continued goodness. The Lord has been consistently faithful and we have once again experienced the fact that He is indeed 'the same yesterday, today and forever'.

Throughout the year, there were times of sadness due to bereavement. It is relieving and comforting to know and appreciate the strength and consoling power of the living God during those periods of loss. Let us also thank God for the joy and gladness that He brings to His people in abundant supply.

Our week should never begin without coming to worship our Maker and Saviour.

Each Sunday we encourage people of all ages to come and take part in the teaching and worship at both morning and evening services, Sunday school, Bible Class, Crèche, Children's Church or Thrive.

There are many who serve in Raffrey in so many ways, through Prayer, as organists, in the choir or praise group, in welcoming us to the service, by providing the announcements and operating the sound and vision, ensuring the building is warm and clean, bringing the gifts of flowers and preparing the meeting house for special occasions and coming together to worship every Sunday.

We thank our minister Rev Brian Small for teaching us faithfully Sunday morning and evening, in Midweek, and for his diligent preparation. He has also been extremely busy taking care of 1st Saintfield congregation during their vacancy. We would commend him and the manse family to you and urge that we as a congregation continually uphold them and all who lead in the work of the congregation and its organisations in prayer.

We were delighted to welcome new families into the fellowship and to have so many of our congregation back to worship in person.

Unfortunately, early restrictions in 2022 meant splitting the organisations for enrolment missing out on displays, making alternative arrangements for communion, and further delays to Tuesday Afternoon Fellowship and PW. Seating restrictions and wearing of face coverings continued until Easter Sunday 17th April.

It was good, at last, to have the opportunity for outreach at the Jubilee on 5th June, to invite friends and give thanks for our Queen's Life of commitment and service to her Saviour and the nation. An invitation was extended to both Barnamaghery and Raffrey lodges to attend and the lunch afterwards was appreciated by all. PW also met and celebrated with a special Jubilee tea.

The May Gift Day services were conducted by Rev John Woodside in the morning and Rev Brian Small in the evening.

A family fun evening was held on 24 June.

The winter session got under way in September with the commencement of Girls Brigade and Boys Brigade. Thrive's first meeting was in October.

These organisations are indeed a unique and privileged opportunity to present the gospel to many precious children and young people. The Boys Brigade and Girls Brigade have grown, this is indeed testimony to the work and faithfulness of the leaders.

Our Irish Mission services were on 20th March. The morning service speaker was former member Mrs Michelle Stewart now serving in Cloghey. An invitation was extended to 1st Saintfield to join us for the Evening mission service. Presbytery supported this by inviting

all the churches to join us via live stream to hear Mr David Boyd from Adelaide Road Dublin.

Our autumn mission weekend was shared with the Bike Show. This was a great outreach to lots of folks from around about and far afield Mr Jim Armstrong of the Christian Motorcycle Association spoke at the morning service and Rev. Peter and Mrs Jane Fleming brought us the Word and news of the work in Nepal in the evening.

At the end of October we again met to give thanks to God for His abundant Harvest; we had the privilege of being ministered to by two new ministers in Presbytery, from Clough and Seaforde Rev David Bingham on Sunday evening and Rev John Torrens from 2nd Saintfield on Harvest Monday night.

The 2022 Moderators appeal was for Ukraine.

Joy at the recommencement of Tuesday Afternoon Fellowship has been tempered by the sad loss of many faithful members during its two-year absence. Mr William Jackson and several other founding members felt that it was time to stand down after years of diligent service. The new leadership team - consisting of Alistair Campbell, Ian Jackson and Mervyn Murdock - have been greatly encouraged by the numbers attending, a mixture of "old regulars" and "new blood". The first meeting was held in October with a hearty lunch and song and testimony provided by Mr John Porter. Bill Dunn and Paul and Ruth Greenfield led subsequent meetings. Please pray for this vital ministry as the "bread of life" is presented alongside food of the earthly kind.

The Congregational Committee had completed 3 years, after consideration it was felt that the committee should run for a fourth year. Session are grateful to all who served on Committee with special thanks to the office bearers, sub committees and their convenors.

The Representative Elder to Presbytery was Alistair Campbell and Associate Elder Billy McClements. The Representative Elder to the General Assembly was Ian Jackson.

The Outreach Committee sought to build on the work of 2018 and continued with planning for 2023. Please make every effort to attend these events and remember them prayerfully.

It is wonderful to know that we worship a God who continually showers us with blessings from heaven. Let us continue to be diligent in our work for Him, realising that only what is done for the Saviour really counts. He died that we may live and so we want to demonstrate this living hope in our lives so that those in our community will see the difference Jesus Christ makes to life and living.