

**CONNOR 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

Connor Congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
Carncombe Road
Connor
Ballymena
BT42 3LA

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC105329)

CHARITY TRUSTEES

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

Rev Philip David Thompson	Mr Robert Campbell Allen
Mr Matthew Currie	Mr Craig Mark Preston
Mr Nigel James Francey	Mr Charles Rodney Houston
Mr Alistair John Greer	Mr James Barr
Mr David Preston	Mr Warwick Farquhar
Mr George McDowell	Mr William Mervyn Johnston
Mr William Allan Agnew	Mr David Thompson
Mr Geoffrey Samuel Allen	Mr Frew Johnston
Mr Robert James Nicholl	Mr Neil McCullough
Mr David Murdoch	

PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS

Minister	Rev Philip David Thompson
Clerk of Session	Mr William Mervyn Johnston
Treasurer	Mr Nigel James Francey
Secretary	Mr Alistair John Greer

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

John Finnegan
Potter Finnegan Limited
Unit 25 The Courtyard Business Park
190 Galgorm Road
Ballymena
BT42 1HL

BANKERS

Danske Bank
1-2 Broadway
Ballymena
BT43 6EA

SOLICITORS

Boal Anderson & Co
56 High Street
Ballymena
Co. Antrim
BT43 6UH

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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 Sessions 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. 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. Voting members of the congregation elect Elders to the Kirk Session.

All meetings of the congregation are under the governance of the Kirk Session. Stated meetings of the Kirk session were held on 9 occasions during the year ending 31st December 2023.

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. Connor Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the Ballymena 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

Connor 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.

Connor Presbyterian Church exists to see unbelieving people become lifelong followers of Jesus Christ. We have three main objectives.

Objective 1 To encourage people to make use of the ordinary means of grace

- The preaching and teaching of God's word is central to all we do;
- Prayer. Both as individuals and corporately;
- Communion

Objective 2 To equip our people for service

- Help our people to identify the gifts God has given them to serve others;
- Strengthen and enlarge the core group of God's people to take up key roles of ministry;
- Identify appropriate training to enable our people to carry out acts of service.

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Objective 3 To engage our people in missionary outreach at home and overseas.

- To encourage our people to play their part in personal outreach and ministry.
- We have followed this pattern by partnering with:
 - West Kirk Congregation in Belfast;
 - Grace and Hope church plant, Carlisle Circus, Belfast
 - Calvary Mission in Westport, Co. Mayo;
 - Hamsayeh International in West London;
 - EMF – Rogerio & Sonia Ramos in Sines, Portugal.
 - EMF – Krzystof & Aneta Rutkowsky Poland. Book translation.
 - PCI Missionaries in Kenya.
 - Operation Mobilisation Roscommon.

ACTIVITIES AND OBJECTIVES

Meetings are as outlined below. The dedication and commitment of Rev. Thompson and leaders of the organisations is greatly appreciated, and we are thankful to God that congregational life is now reverting to a more normal arrangement.

Sunday	Prayer meeting		11.15am
	Sunday School & Bible Class		11.00am
	Morning Service		12.00 noon
	Prayer meeting		6.00pm
	Evening Service		6.30pm
Monday	Boys Brigade		
	▪ Anchor Boys & Junior Section		7.00pm
	▪ Company & senior Section		7.30pm
Tuesday	A Warm Place – (November – March)	Weekly	10-12noon
	Girls Brigade		
	▪ Explorers		6.30pm
	▪ Juniors, Seniors, Brigaders		7.30pm
Wednesday	Prayer Meeting		8.00pm
Thursday	Kirk Session meeting	Monthly	7.30pm
	Presbyterian Women (PW)	Monthly	8.00pm
	Church Committee	As announced	7.30pm
	Indoor Bowling Club	As announced	8.00pm
	Craft Group	As announced	8.00pm
Friday	“Men Alive” men’s group	As announced	7.00pm

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Worship and prayer

The congregation normally meets for worship each Sunday at 12.00pm and 6.30pm. During the week, the Bible Study provides an opportunity for members to meet for fellowship, to study the scriptures and for a time of prayer. On a Wednesday evening, we have a prayer meeting.

Two marriage services were conducted, and we also sought to comfort those who had been bereaved during the year.

At 31 December 2023 there were 268 communicant members and 308 families connected with the congregation.

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Pastoral care

Rev. Thompson and the Elders carry out pastoral visitation throughout the year. 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 or by one of the congregation's pastoral visitors.

Mission and outreach

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 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, assist with the running costs of Union Theological College, the Church's training college for ministry students, and financially supports congregation in the areas of worship, discipleship, global mission, outreach, leadership, and pastoral care.

Presbytery

The congregation was represented at the regular meetings of the 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 were nominated to attend the meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland held in Assembly Buildings, Belfast, in June.

Property

The Congregational Committee met on 3 occasions during the year. The Congregational Committee had oversight of the material needs of the congregation. Their main activities ensured the upkeep of the Meeting House, Halls, Manse Farm and Graveyard.

Organisations

The Kirk Session

The Kirk Session met throughout the year to deal with the spiritual interests of our congregation.

The following organisations met throughout the year as announced.

Sunday Worship

Our Sunday Services were open to all to attend. We met to worship God, to pray and sing his praises. God's Word was faithfully preached, and we believe by the power of the Holy Spirit God's people were built up in their faith and those who do not have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ were challenged to repent and live for Christ.

Sunday School, Bible Class and Ablaze

Children and young people were taught God's word in Sunday School and Bible Class. This is to give them an understanding of what God has to say through his word and that they may come to faith in Christ and live their lives for him.

A Warm Place

A Warm Place meets from 10 am to 12 noon on Tuesdays from November to March. It provides a time for people of all ages to come for tea or coffee and a chat. God's word is read and explained at each meeting.

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Boys Brigade and Girls Brigade.

The uniformed organisations of BB and GB meet from September to April, and these are open to all boys and girls, respectively. God's word is taught in each evening and a full program of activities provided.

Presbyterian Women

Women of all ages met monthly until March. They had a varied programme providing reports on missionary interest and giving women opportunities for fellowship and special events.

The Congregational Committee

The Congregational Committee dealt with the temporal needs of the congregation as it met throughout the year.

The Bowling Club

The Bowling Club was open to all and provided friendship for those whose interests were in playing bowls.

The Craft group

The Craft group was open to all to learn new skills and nurture friendships.

All the meetings come under the governance of the Kirk Session who appoint all leaders. Connor Presbyterian adheres to the Presbyterian Church in Ireland Taking Care policy.

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 using 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 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.

The Kirk Session has had regard to the Charity Commission's public benefit requirement statutory guidance.

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FINANCIAL REVIEW

The congregation's main source of income is members' contributions through the Weekly Freewill Offering. There were 197 contributors during the year [184 in previous year, 2022] donating a total of £156,446 (£126,660 in previous year, 2022)

Total Income of the congregation during the year was £359,285, compared to £325,496 in the previous year.

Total expenditure increased from £261,779 to £295,464.

RESPONSIBILITIES IN RESPECT OF 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 congregations 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.

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 congregations 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.

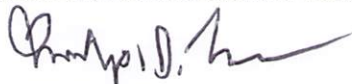
GOING CONCERN

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.

Approved by the Kirk Session at a meeting on 16th May 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



Rev Philip David Thompson
Trustee



Mr Alastair John Greer
Trustee