

CLOUGHWATER CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

The Trustees of Cloughwater Congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland present their Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2023 and a Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at that date.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Cloughwater Congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, 125 Cloughwater Road, Ballymena, BT43 6QR

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC105373)

CHARITY TRUSTEES

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

Rev Alistair McCracken
Mr Ian Brown
Mr Ivan Davison
Mr David Galbraith
Mr Andrew Mauger
Mr John McCullough (Died June 2023)
Mr William McKeown
Mr Edward Montgomery
Mr Stephen Porter
Mr Robert Simpson
Mr Stephen Simpson

PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS

Minister	Rev Alistair McCracken
Clerk of Session	Mr Robert Simpson
Treasurer	Mr Ian Brown
Secretary	Mr Uel Houston

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Mr Edwin McLaughlin, D T Carson & Co, Chartered Accountants, 51-53 Thomas Street, Ballymena, BT43 6AZ

BANKERS

Danske Bank , 1-2 Broadway, Ballymena, BT43 7AA

CLOUGHWATER 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 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 in January, March, May, September and November.

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 the votes of 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. Cloughwater congregation of the 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 each of the Kirk Sessions of the congregations.

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, administrative and judicial authority, in dealing with all matters brought before it. The General Assembly is normally constituted during a 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.

CLOUGHWATER CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT – CONT'D

DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

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

Cloughwater 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 our members to play their part in fulfilling God's mission to our world.

Just as, "Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever", we believe this is our purpose as a congregation. We are "A chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you (we) may declare the praises of him who called you (us) out of darkness into his wonderful light." (1 Peter 2:9) We take from the catechism and this verse that we are to be engaged in worship as we glorify and praise God together; in proclamation, as we declare the word of God/gospel within and outside the congregation, at home and abroad; in fellowship, living, serving and growing together "in grace and in knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ".

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 three 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 meetings and has a wide range of organisations including :

Afternoon Fellowship	Focus (20's & 30's Group)
Girls' Brigade	Boys' Brigade
Flame (Youth Fellowship)	Presbyterian Women
Praise Group	Sunday School / Fuel
Creche	Tea & Tots

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Worship and prayer

The congregation normally meets for worship each Sunday at 11.30 am (11am July & August) and 7pm September to June (1st and 3rd Sundays). Creche is provided for pre-school children during morning worship and other children up to the age of eight leaving the main church during the service for kids club. During the week the Midweek Prayer and Bible Study provides an opportunity for members to meet together for fellowship, to study the scriptures and for a time of prayer.

As well as our regular services of worship, we were able to conduct three marriage services in the church during the 2023 year. We give thanks for faithfully attended services and sought to comfort those who had been bereaved during the year.

At 31st December 2023 there were 145 communicant members with three new members enrolled during the year and 156 families connected with the congregation. The average attendance at morning worship was 120 and 40 at the evening service.

CLOUGHWATER CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT – CONT'D

Pastoral care

Members of the congregation are visited by the minister and elders throughout the year, whenever this was unable to be carried out, telephone communication was utilised throughout the year. Those who are sick, the elderly, the bereaved and those facing difficult circumstances are given special attention through visits and the provision of support, friendship and prayer.

A Care Team is established to visit those members of the congregation in hospital or residential/nursing homes, aiming to show the concern of the church and to share sensitively the gospel message. The Care Team also provides practical care to those at times of specific need including, for example, visitation of new mothers.

Mission and outreach

At a local level the congregation seeks to reach out to the surrounding community with the Good News of the gospel. The congregation is connected with two neighbouring Primary schools (Clough & Kirkinriola) and our minister regularly attended the schools to conduct worship at morning assembly from the start of the academic year in September 2023. There is a missionary committee within the congregation who together organise support for mission at home and abroad, providing updates/information on our mission partners and the work they are involved in across the globe. Dedicated missionary fund by the congregation help provide charitable donations to a number of mission organisations such as, Compassion, Hamsayeh International, Pioneers, Wycliffe Bible Translation, Calvary Mission, Scripture Union Projects, Mission Africa, Faith Mission, FEBA, Asia Link and Release International.

The congregation also 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 congregation in the areas of worship, discipleship, global mission, outreach, leadership and pastoral care.

The congregation also contributes to the denominations annual World Development Appeal and any other special appeals throughout the year.

Presbytery

The congregation was represented at the regular meetings of Presbytery by our minister and one of the elders. This provides an important link between the congregation and the wider structures of the church.

Property

The congregation ensures that the church property is kept in good condition and all work is overseen by the church committee.

Cloughwater Congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT – CONT'D

Organisations

Boys' Brigade

The object of 1st Cloughwater BB is the advancement of Christ's kingdom among boys and the promotion of habits of obedience, reverence, discipline, self-respect and all that tends towards a true Christian manliness. We meet on Monday nights between September and March and there are 3 sections.

This year the Anchor Boys and Junior Section did a series on Bible Heros. We looked at different characters from the bible and discovered even though they were ordinary people God did wonderful things with them. This year we had Fun with Drums out for a night and the Anchor Boys held a cake sale for Guide Dogs for the Blind where they raised £220. This year the company section did a series on Jesus is better than which looked at different characters in the bible and compared them with Jesus, which sometimes was led by some of the elders in the church, this really engaged the boys. As part of our skills section the boys built bird tables and we had several members of the congregation come along who took a session on carrying out survival skills, wiring a plug and baking. We were able to have our annual football match with Clough this year which we won 3-2 and we entered a football tournament organised by 1st Buckna BB. We also took the boys go-karting at Raceview before Christmas.

We had our parents night in the middle of March where we had a collection for Children's Heartbeat Trust which we raised £200. To close the year, we have organised an afternoon away to Airtastic in Newtownabbey where the Anchor Boys will have a session in the soft play and the junior and company section have a session in the inflatable park.

Girls' Brigade

There are 50 girls (aged 3 to 18 years) registered in our GB Company. There are 7 Commissioned Officers, 6 Associate Leaders and 1 Sub Officer leading our Company. We meet on Thursday evenings from mid-September until the end of March. Throughout the year we have succeeded in having a varied badgework programme for all sections covering Spiritual, Educational, Service and Physical aspects. Each night we follow the GBNI Scripture course in all sections and this year we have been looking at the Promises of God. Our Explorer section each night have been listening to their Bible story and filling out their activity books, playing games, singing and doing activities such as planting seeds in used cardboard cups, making Christmas decorations and making Mother's Day gifts. Our Junior section, as well as Bible class, have been doing recycling crafts, planting seeds in used cups, learning how to play netball, dancing, team games and took part in our District team games event. They have been learning about the Ulster Scots throughout the year with visits from the Ulster Scots Society, learning about the language, the history, music and culture. The Senior and Brigadier section have also been busy with their Bible class, doing crafts, playing badminton and took part in our District badminton competition. They have been recycling and upcycling, sanded down and painted small wooden chairs once used at our Church. They also have been looking at the Ulster Scots and joined with the Juniors in their Ulster Scots activities. The Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme continues to run in our Company with 3 girls completing Bronze level, 1 starting Bronze level and 1 working towards Gold level. We had a very successful fund-raising event for Habitat for Humanity NI. Parents and girls were asked to donate used or unwanted items for the charity. A representative for Habitat NI came and talked to the girls about what they do and how we can support them. Attendance has been very good throughout the year.

FLAME (Youth Fellowship)

FLAME meets fortnightly for young people aged 11 to 18 years old. An average of 15 young people attend and enjoy a mix of food, games and Bible Study together. They enjoyed a wide variety of activities including ice cream sundae eating at the manse, kayaking/canoeing in Cushendall and organised a social at the end of January raising £375 towards Asia Link. The young people participated in the local community carol singing in December along with their Christmas meeting exchanging secret Santa presents. A number of guest speakers came along throughout the year to help the members think about what the Bible says about a variety of topics, how to live a Christian life and share faith with others.

CLOUGHWATER CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT – CONT'D

Presbyterian Women

The Cloughwater Ladies group meet on a Tuesday evening, once a month from September through to May with approximately 30 ladies attending each meeting. We have followed the PW theme of "Being Transformed" this year and at each meeting we have had a devotional time based on this theme. Throughout the year we have had a praise night, a Christmas craft night, a meal out together and a fund-raiser for Macmillan cancer care. We also have had visiting speakers with topics which included Mountain Rescue, women's wellness and the plight of the persecuted church in the Middle East. In January we had a Bible reading challenge when ladies focused on reading a chapter of 1st Samuel every day. Some of our ladies knit baby hats, coats and blankets which were donated to a local charity. Our annual Church service took place in February when we heard of the work of spreading the Gospel in Asia. Throughout the year we have enjoyed great fellowship as we have been "transformed" by God's love and presence with us and we continue to follow our PW motto "Living for Jesus"

Sunday School

Sunday School normally meet each Sunday morning from 10:30 to 11:15 running from September to June. There are 50 children registered ranging from age 4 to 17 with 8 teachers spread out across each class group. The teachers follow "Go Teach" literature during each class and the children also learn catechisms and memory verses.

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.

CLOUGHWATER CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT – CONT'D

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.

The Kirk Session has had regard to the Charity Commissions Public benefit requirement statutory guidance.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The congregation's main source of income is members' contributions through the Weekly Freewill Offering. There were 124 contributing families during the year [119 in 2022] donating a total of £59,861 [£56,426 in 2022]

Total Income of the congregation during the year was £132,332 compared to £121,042 in the previous year.

Total expenditure (including that of organisations) was £136,449 compared to £117,513 in 2022.

CLOUGHWATER CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT – CONT'D

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.

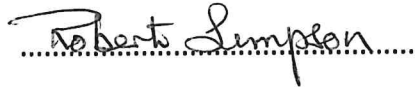
As the congregation's total income does not exceed £250,000, the Trustees have elected under Section 64(3) of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 to prepare a receipts and payment account and a statement of assets and liabilities.

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 30th April 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



Rev Alistair McCracken



Mr Robert Simpson