

**AGHADOWEY CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN
IRELAND**

**Trustees Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended
31 December 2023**

AGHADOWEY 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.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Aghadowey congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Ardreagh Road, Aghadowey, Coleraine

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC105547)

CHARITY TRUSTEES

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

Rev Knox Jones
John Wilson
Alfie Gurney
William Knox
Stephen Knox

Stanley McFaul
Ivan McNaugher
James Smyth
John Wilkinson

PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS

Minister
Clerk of Session
Treasurer

Rev Knox A Jones
William Knox
Ian Gregg

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Mrs Olive Wallace, 101 Coolyvenny Road, Englishtown, Coleraine, Co Londonderry BT51 3SF

BANKERS

Danske Bank, PO Box 183, Donegall Square West, Belfast BT1 6JS

SOLICITORS

Macaulay Wray, 35 New Row, Coleraine, Co Londonderry. BT52 1AH

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 congregation. All members are entitled to propose, speak and exercise equal votes at meetings, except that the Moderator, the ministers in active duty in the congregation, has no deliberative but only a casting vote.

Stated meetings of the Kirk session are held at least five times 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. Aghadowey congregation of the Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the Coleraine and Limavady 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.

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.

Aghadowey 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.

The congregation's mission purpose is to so proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, by word and deed, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit unbelievers will hear and respond in repentance and faith and, having received new life in Christ, will grow in maturity.

We seek to advance Christ's Kingdom, both in spiritual maturity and numerically within our congregation, in the local community and further afield.

Our aim as a congregation is to reach out to everyone in our community with the good news of Christ, challenging men and women and young people to respond in repentance and faith and then to grow toward maturity in Christ. To this end we seek to live out our faith within our congregation, in the wider community and playing our part to reach out to the whole world.

We are grateful for the long history of faithful witness through our congregation and seek to be faithful to our Saviour as we face the challenges of the continuously changing world of the twenty-first century. We value the faithful and relevant preaching of God's word, an authentic and inclusive style of worship, and loving supportive fellowship.

As a congregation our Vision/Mission Statement is:

“We help people follow Jesus – every day”.

This statement includes the twin emphases:

- of helping people begin to follow Jesus – that is outreach and witness and
- helping each other who already follow Jesus to grow in whole-life discipleship, ministry and mission in church, at home, among our neighbours, in our daily occupations and our leisure activities.

We seek to see all our activities and ministries, as a congregation, through the lens of this vision – we ask of every activity, ‘how will this activity help people follow Jesus every day?’

ACTIVITIES AND OBJECTIVES

The congregation meets for worship every Sunday and visitors are welcome to join. The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is normally 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 jointly with Crossgar Congregation and has a wide range of organizations including

- Sunday School
- Grid (Sunday morning teaching for secondary school age)
- Crèche
- Children's Church
- Youth Fellowship
- Midweek Fellowship
- Ladies Monthly Bible study
- Ladies craft class - monthly
- Presbyterian Women
- Men's Football
- Boys' Brigade
- Youth Club
- Walking Group
- Tots Group

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Worship and prayer

The congregation normally meets for worship each Sunday at 12 noon. The Midweek Fellowship meets in conjunction with Crossgar Congregation. These meetings provide opportunities for members to meet together to study the scriptures, for a time of prayer and for fellowship. Some years ago we developed a monthly 'Prayer Calendar' for the congregation, which has been updated at least twice each year. We use this diary as the basis of a daily e-mail to encourage prayer in the congregation.

As well as our regular services, six funeral services were conducted during the year. Two weddings were also conducted during the year.

At 31 December 2023 there were 236 communicant members and 149 families connected with the congregation. The average weekly attendance at morning worship was 120.

Pastoral care

Members of the congregation who were unable to attend church due to sickness or age were visited on a regular basis by the Minister and elders.

Mission and outreach

At a local level the congregation seeks to reach out to the local community through the various organizations mentioned above.

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 denominations annual World Development Appeal and any other special appeals.

We also keep an ongoing interest in other missionary organizations including services each year when we have speakers from the Belfast City Mission and Tearfund/Christian Aid.

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 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 is currently preparing to proceed with the repair works to the interior of the Church building which hopefully will be carried out in 2024. These works will include remedial work to the floor and gallery and creating a welcome area as well as bringing the building into line with fire safety legislation and disability access legislation.

Organizations

Sunday School and Grid. Sunday School meets prior to the Church Service. Children from pre-school to primary 7 are regular attenders. There are 25 children on the roll, 20 of whom attend regularly. Grid is our Sunday morning ministry for children of secondary school age. Approximately 8 young people attend an age-appropriate teaching time with a more relaxed approach. Both Sunday School and Grid young people took part in our Children's and Young People's Day Service in June and in our Nativity Service in December.

Youth Fellowship meets jointly with Crossgar congregation.

Youth Club - Youth Club meets alternate weekly. On average there have been 28 young people each week. During Youth Club a wide range of activities are available such as PlayStations, Nintendo Wii,

Table football, Pool table, table tennis and various sports in the sports hall. During Youth Club we have a 5 minute epilogue each week.

1st Aghadowey Boys Brigade Company – The Boys’ Brigade meets weekly from October - March. It is a Christ-centred uniformed organization with around 37 boys in attendance of primary and secondary school age, 6 officers and 1 helper. A programme of badge work and Bible study is followed, along with fun and games. Our BB Enrolment Service took place in November.

Presbyterian Women - Presbyterian Women is a missionary organization for women, which meets monthly from September to April when we have a variety of guest speakers. We held our annual PW Service in September. A total of approximately 39 are on the roll with an average attendance of 23 at each meeting. PW raise funds for missionary work, which is administered through PW in Assembly Buildings.

Tots Group – there would be an average weekly attendance of 19 babies and toddlers along with parents/guardians. A safe, secure and fun environment is provided where parents/carers/guardians can enjoy a cuppa and the children are provided with a suitable snack.

Volunteers

The Trustees wish to acknowledge their deep appreciation of those who give freely of their time by serving on committees and helping with organizations 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 organizations, 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 150 contributors during the year (135 in previous year, 2022) donating a total of £62,462 (£58,059 in previous year, 2022)

Total Income of the congregation during the year was £207,813 compared to £196,539 (excluding VAT) in the previous year.

Total Expenditure was £106,275 compared to £118,481 (excluding VAT) in 2022.

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 congregations 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 11th March 2024 and signed on its behalf by

Rev K A Jones (Minister) *Knox Jones*
Date: *11/03/2024*

William J Knox (Clerk of Session)
William J. Knox
Date: *11/03/2024*