

FIRST DERRY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

TRUSTEES' REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2023.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial and comply with the Church's constitution, the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015)"

Objectives and activities

First Derry Presbyterian Church is a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI). 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 principal function of the Church is to support the advancement of religion through holding services of worship and other religious activities. These, and all that follow, are open to anyone of appropriate age and gender to access, without regard to whether they are members of the Church's congregation. This is fundamental to the practical delivery of the benefits of Christianity.

First Derry Presbyterian Church has a unique location on the Walls of the City with our parish area including the City of Derry/Londonderry and beyond.

Demographic changes on the Cityside during the 'troubles' and beyond have greatly affected Church populations and at First Derry Presbyterian Church we have been compelled to find new ways to reach out to our local area.

Our congregation seeks to fulfil the commission of 'Salt and Light' to our community through being a welcoming presence on the City Walls with our doors open to all.

The congregation met for worship every Sunday and visitors, irrespective of race, religion or gender, are welcome to join. Worship is shared with Monreagh Presbyterian Church.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was observed twice during 2023, in the Spring and the Autumn.

The congregation has a wide range of organisations including:

- Sunday School
- Creche during Sunday worship
- Men's Club
- Presbyterian Women

Pantry Project (Food Bank)

The congregation is actively involved in this project working across all communities providing crisis intervention to those experiencing food poverty. The ethos behind this project is community giving back to community.

Cuppa Sunday

On the first Sunday of each month, prior to Morning Worship we meet in the Church hall for friendship and refreshments. This has proved very popular and many of the congregation come early to avail of this facility.

The trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the Church should undertake.

FIRST DERRY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Achievements and performance

Worship and prayer

Worship each Sunday was conducted by The Rev Colin Jones, visiting ministers and Accredited Preachers (including Mrs Susan Thomas, one of the Church's members).

During the year 3 Sacrament's of Baptism was carried out.

At 31 December 2023 there were 427 members on the communion roll with 255 of families under the pastoral care of the congregation.

The average weekly attendance at morning worship was 90.

Pastoral care

Members of the congregation who are unable to attend Church due to sickness or age are visited on a regular basis by one of the Elders. A recording of each service is undertaken and links are available to Church members on request.

The Elders visit each member/family in their district prior to each communion service and visit members who are unwell or unable to attend Church either in their home or in hospital.

Mission and outreach

Mission statement

First Derry, the oldest Presbyterian Church in Londonderry, the second City in Northern Ireland, is in the community for the community.

Fulfilling this Mission

At a local level the congregation aims to fulfil its mission by:

- demonstrating God's love and taking the Gospel message to all our neighbours.
- establishing and building connections of friendship with other denominations.
- sharing our beautifully restored Church building as a shared sacred and civic space and to this end we host many events, both for and by the local community, ranging from local services to historians' talks.
- encouraging our members to deepen their understanding of the Gospel and commitment to Christ through the weekly worship service with the sermon being the main source of this encouragement.
- members of all ages are considered vital by the Kirk Session and are encouraged to take part in worship through singing in our choir, playing a musical instrument, reading a lesson, delivering the children's address and taking part in presentations.
- informing our members about mission within PCI through updates from the pulpit, an Annual PW Service, the quarterly United Appeal leaflets and the Presbyterian Herald and Wider World magazines.
- enthusing and equipping our members for mission through the weekly Sunday worship service where we are encouraged to apply scripture to everyday living and interact with respect and love in our homes and places of study, work and recreation. Additionally, we are equipped for and participate in mission through various activities such as PW and Men's Club. Our young people receive preparation for mission through the work done by the dedicated leaders in the Sunday School and Bible Class.
- having a welcoming presence on the City Walls with our doors open to all. Since reopening the Church in 2011 after 9 years of displacement due to dry rot there has been great interest in our story from across the city and beyond. The Blue Coat School Heritage Centre is situated to the rear of the Church building. It offers a unique insight into the story of Presbyterianism in the North West. Volunteer guides take visitors around both the Church and the Blue Coat Heritage Centre giving them the history of First Derry Church from the founding of the original Church in 1690 until the present day.

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

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Presbytery

The congregation was represented at the meetings of Presbytery by our Minister and/or one of the Elders. This provides an important link between the congregation and the wider structures of the Church.

General Assembly

The Minister and one of our Elders were nominated to attend the annual meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, held in Assembly Buildings, Belfast, in June 2023.

Property

The House and Property Committee are responsible for the upkeep of the Church and Manse.

In July 2015 as a result of a fire at a nearby store, large stained glass windows above the pulpit were slightly deformed. The damage is relatively minor and the Committee are still considering the best way forward.

Organisations

First Derry Ladies' group had another successful year in 2023 under the leadership of our minister's wife, Mrs Elizabeth Jones. Each of our monthly meetings had an attendance of 25-30 ladies and we were pleased to welcome some new faces. Our varied programme under the themes of 'Deeper Together' and 'Being Transformed' included storytelling with Madeline McCully, an update of work in Malawi from the Convener of the PCI Global Mission Committee, aerobics, a daytrip to the Scarecrow Festival in Gracehill, a testament evening by singer songwriter Louise Campbell, our annual ladies' service in March and our Christmas meal and fun night in December. We continue to donate to both the home and overseas mission work of Presbyterian Women in Church House, Belfast and in 2023 we supported our local Kinship Care Christmas Appeal which had a huge response from our congregation.

The Men's Club recommenced in January 2023, having been suspended for several years due to Coronavirus. Meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month. An exciting programme of talks was arranged. These included talks on The strategic role of Londonderry in the Battle of the Atlantic, Problems faced by PSNI, Life as a District Recorder/Judge, the North West Model Aircraft Club (NWMAC), Life as an Army Padre, Taxidermy and the Harbour Master spoke about the Port of Londonderry. The May outing was held at the Model Aircraft Club at Prehen. We enjoyed a flying demonstration of a variety of aircraft and were then allowed to fly the planes ourselves. This was followed by a BBQ at the Club. The Men's Club is open to all men in the City and they will be made most welcome.

Sunday school returned for 2023 with us all meeting together in the lower hall. Primary 1 to Primary 4 inclusive, Primary 5 to Primary 7 inclusive, and the post Primary Bible Class. Although our numbers may be small it gives us the opportunity to come together on occasions and work as one big group. Our theme for our Children's Day service on the 18th June was "Our Fathers". As this coincided with Father's Day, we made it extra special by inviting all the children's dads to the front of the church. On that day our children and young people also got to show their talents. On Wednesday 13th December we had our Sunday School Party at Extreme Bounce. On Sunday 17th December the children took part in the Family Christmas Service beginning with the lighting of the advent candle. Once again, our children got involved through reciting of poems, reading prayers and a solo performance.

Volunteers

The Trustees of First Derry Presbyterian Church 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 including Sunday School Teachers, Creche Supervisors and Youth Leaders.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Public Benefit

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 Commission's public benefit requirement statutory guidance.

Financial review

The congregation's main source of income is members' contributions through the Weekly Freewill Offering. There were 142 families contributing during the year (2022 - 138) donating a total of £75,591(2022 - £69,660), (note 3).

Total income of the congregation during the year was £92,908, an increase to the previous year income of £89,016.

Total expenditure increased from £147,503 in 2022 to £158,097 in 2023. This was mainly due to a full year of assessment fees payable in relation to the Minister.

It is the policy of the Church that unrestricted funds which have not been designated for a specific use should be maintained at a level equivalent to between three and six month's expenditure. The trustees consider that reserves at this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue the Church's current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised. This level of reserves has been maintained throughout the year.

Going Concern

The trustees understand and appreciate the importance of contributions from members of the congregation to ensure the smooth running of the Church. The trustees believe that the congregation has sufficient resources to meet any commitments that will arise in the 12 months from the date of signing this Report. The trustees also appreciate that for this healthy financial situation to continue the Church will depend on the continuing support from members of the congregation through their contributions.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Risk Review

Risks are continually reviewed by the trustees and systems and procedures implemented where required to manage any 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.

FIRST DERRY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

Structure, governance and management

The Kirk Session

The charity trustees of the congregation are the members of the 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 the Moderator and the Ministers in active duty in the congregation who have no deliberative but only a casting vote.

Stated meetings of the Kirk Session are held at least twice a year.

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 approval from 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 congregation assigned to it by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. First Derry Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the Derry and Donegal 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.

FIRST DERRY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

The trustees who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

Mr J M Agnew
Mrs L Dickey
Mrs S Dingley
Mr W Hamilton
Mr W J Kyle
Dr D R Lee
Mr R Mackey
Mr C McCandless
Mr A McCartney
Mr G Patterson
Mr J Reid
Mrs D Simpson
Mr C Tennis
Mrs J Tennis
Dr M Parker
Mr C Wilson
Mrs L Hamilton
Reverend C Jones

Trustees who are also Session Members are elected and appointed by the congregation.

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The law applicable to charities in Northern Ireland requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Church and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the Church for that year.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping sufficient accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Church and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008, the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008 and the provisions of the trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Church and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

The trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.



Mr W J Kyle

Trustee

Dated: 19 April 2024