



FIRST DROMARA CONGREGATION OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

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

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland NIC 105676

The Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023 including a Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at that date.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

CHARITY NAME

First Dromara Congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

ADDRESS

4 Church Road, Dromara, DROMORE, Co Down, BT25 2NS

CHARITY NUMBER

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland NIC 105676

CHARITY TRUSTEES

Rev. Scott W Moore
William Clinghan
David A Copes
Robert Hawthorne
Paul Reain

Norman Biggerstaff
Brian Copes
Ronnie Crawford
Ian David McCullagh

PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS

Minister Rev Scott W Moore

Clerk of Kirk Session Ian D McCullagh

Congregational Secretary Mrs Angela Cobb

Treasurer Norman Biggerstaff

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Mrs Agnes Michelle Harte CMA, 1 Woodvale, Dromara, DROMORE, Co Down, BT25 2JA

BANKERS

Danske Bank, 35-39 Bridge Street, BANBRIDGE, Co Down, BT32 3JL

SOLICITORS

W G Maginess & Son Ltd., 68 Bow Street, LISBURN, Co Antrim, BT28 1AL

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 minister in active duty in the congregation, has no deliberative but only a casting vote.

Stated meetings of the Kirk Session are held at least twice 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. First Dromara congregation of the Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the Dromore 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, administrative 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. First Dromara 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 the spread of the Gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, locally, nationally and internationally and to encourage our members of all ages to a greater Christian experience and, with God's help, to be engaged in all aspects of this outreach work.

Our vision is, by the grace of God, to be an inclusive, welcoming community of Christ's people of all ages, which:

- is increasingly characterised by love for God, and love and concern for others;
- is committed to the historic Christian gospel as revealed in the Bible;
- is relevant to people of this time and place.

In all of this we, at First Dromara, seek to honour the Lord. We believe the Lord Jesus Christ to be the sole King and Head of the Church. We believe the Word of God as set forth in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the only infallible rule of faith and practise and the supreme standard of the church. We uphold and teach the doctrines of grace set forth in subordinate standards, that is the Westminster Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter catechisms.

We seek through word and actions to honour God in all we do, to encourage the saints and to reach the lost. We earnestly seek to integrate all age groups into our church family and encourage all age groups to be involved in sharing the gospel message and to become blessings for others beyond the bounds of our congregation.

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 several 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:-

- Sunday School
- Bible Class
- Youth Fellowship
- Mothers and Toddlers
- Inspire Ladies Group
- Ladies Bible Study and Prayer Group
- Congregational Bible Study and Prayer Meeting
- Boys' Brigade (in conjunction with other local churches)
- Girls' Brigade
- Youth Club
- Feast
- Annual Holiday Bible Club
- Ambassadors Football Camp

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Worship and prayer

The congregation normally meets for worship each Sunday at 11.30am (11.00am during July and August) and 6.45pm.(except during July and August). During the week the Bible Study/ Prayer Meeting provides an opportunity for members to meet together for fellowship, to study the Scriptures and for a time of prayer.

We gave thanks for faithful service of the deceased and sought to comfort those who had been bereaved.

At 31 December 2023 there were 127 communicant members and 182 families connected with the congregation. The average weekly attendance at morning worship is 135.

During the year the attendance at most activities has slowly returned to near the pre-pandemic level. We recognise that some have not returned to the services of worship either by choice or because of failing health so we continued to live-stream services.

We are pleased to have attracted some new members during the year, many of whom have taken a full part in our various organisations and activities.

Pastoral Care

Members of the congregation who are unable to attend church due to sickness or age are visited on a regular basis by the minister or elders in an effort to support them both practically and spiritually. The freezer ministry continued through the year.

Mission and outreach

We have an active Mission Committee which seeks to maintain contact with and support for workers at home and overseas. Financial support is given to mission workers in various countries. Many in our congregation have a genuine concern for the spread of the Gospel. During 2023 four members of the congregation travelled overseas on mission teams or mission conferences. Locally, some members have been involved in our Presbytery Outreach at the Balmoral Show. Our young people are also heavily involved in mission work. During 2023 fourteen of our teenagers have been involved as leaders in PCI, CSSM, CEF, Scripture Union, New Horizon and Ambassadors Football teams. Twelve of our young people attended various camps during the summer. Eighteen members hosted an Ambassadors Football Camp and around forty members organised our Holiday Bible Club. In 2023 a team travelled to Dundalk Presbyterian Church in the Irish Republic to conduct a Holiday Bible Club in that church. It was well received in the local congregation and about 40 children attended.

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 Sunday School project, to the Samaritan's Purse Shoebox Appeal and other special appeals.

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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 property owned by the congregation includes a Meeting House and suite of Church Halls with car parking areas and Graveyard, a Church Manse and a former caretaker's residence.

Organisations

Sunday School

The Sunday School meets at 10.30am on Sunday mornings from September to June with an average attendance of 20-22 children from 5 to 11 years. Through teaching the Bible, the Catechism and various activities, children learn what it means to be a Christian. The Sunday School children lead a Nativity Service in December and a Sunday School Service in June.

Bible Class

The Bible Class is for young people from 12 to 18 years. It meets at 10.30am on Sunday mornings from September to May and had an average attendance of 14-16 young people. Here, the young people are taught from God's Word, the Bible; more about how to become a Christian; and those who have already taken that step are encouraged in their Christian life.

Youth Fellowship

Youth Fellowship meets weekly on most Sunday evenings from September to May with monthly social meetings on Saturdays. For young people from 12 to 18 years and with 25 members and an average attendance of 16-18. With a mixture of our own leaders and external speakers, the young people are encouraged to follow God's teaching from the Bible. A residential weekend away was arranged in September to encourage all members for the new season.

Mothers and Toddlers

This group meets on Monday mornings during school term time. Average attendance is around 20-25 children and 15-20 Mothers or Guardians. There is a structured programme of play activities, crafts, refreshments, singing and a short Bible story. The group seeks to encourage babies and small children to interact with each other and also encourages the mothers and guardians to share with each other. It was not possible for the Mothers and Toddlers group to meet during the year.

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Inspire Ladies Group

The Inspire Ladies Group meets on the third Monday of each month from September to May and has a membership of 24 and an average attendance of 20 ladies. There is varied programme of activities and speakers on relevant issues in a spiritual context.

Ladies Bible Study and Prayer Group

This group of about 10 members meet for a time of Bible Study and Prayer on Tuesday mornings during school term time. Studies are led by various members of the group on a rota basis.

Congregational Bible Study / Prayer Meeting

This group has an average attendance of 14 people of all ages. Time is taken to study a short passage from God's Word, the Bible, and members take part in a time of corporate prayer. Meetings continued throughout the year with breaks for public holidays.

Boys' Brigade

The Boys' Brigade is under the oversight of the four Dromara Churches namely First Dromara Presbyterian, Second Dromara Presbyterian, Dromara Reformed Presbyterian and St. John's Church of Ireland. The youngest section – the Anchor Boys, with an average attendance 36 boys, and the oldest section – the Company Section, with an average attendance of 24 boys, meet in First Dromara Church Halls on Wednesday evenings from September to June. The progressive programme of activities seeks to encourage the physical, mental and spiritual growth and development of boys from 5 to 18 years as they seek to fulfill their object "To advance Christ's Kingdom among boys...". The Company Section encourages participation in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme.

Girls' Brigade

The Girls' Brigade had an average attendance of 85 girls on Thursday evenings from September to April. A varied programme of activities relevant to the various age groups is offered each week as they seek to influence, for good, each area of the girls' lives. The object of Girls' Brigade is that Girls might "Seek, Serve and Follow Christ".

Feast

This group, principally for those in their 20s and 30s, usually meets monthly throughout the year for social events and for Bible Study. Meetings are held either in the Church premises, leaders' homes or other outside venues.

Youth Club

The Youth Club is organised in two sections. The Junior Club for 8 to 11 years had 35 members with an average attendance of around 20-22 children. The Senior Club for 12 to 18 years had a membership of 40 young people with an average attendance of around 25. Leaders arrange various games and activities each Friday evening from September to April and there is tuck shop and epilogue each evening. Occasional outings are arranged.

Ambassadors Football Camp

This has taken place in recent years over a week in July. About 60 young people participated led by about 18 leaders. Fitness and football skills are developed and there is a gospel message each evening.

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Annual Holiday Bible Club

A Bible Club was organised for children and young people from nursery school age up to those in their 20s. Some met in the evenings and other groups met during the day, during a week in July. The programme included sport and recreation, involvement in music and visual arts, and a Bible lesson. Some groups were taken to outside activity centres. Approximately 120 children and young people from our congregation and district attended.

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. Special thanks must be expressed to those who gave up their time and talents to broadcast services and produce recordings during the year, which has become an important part of our outreach.

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, Global Mission Workers, 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.

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FINANCIAL REVIEW

The congregation's main source of income is members' contributions through the Weekly Freewill Offering. There were 136 contributors during the year donating a total of £72,425 (£70,275 in the previous year, 2022).

Total Income of the congregation during the year was £228,389 compared to £143,056 in the previous year. This increase was partly due to increased giving by members but also as a result of a bequest from a former member.


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 9 December 2024 and signed on its behalf by

Rev. Michael Davidson 
(Interim Moderator)

Ian D McCullagh 

Date 09/12/24

Date 9/12/24