

# **CLARE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

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

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (106253)



The Session consists of the ordained minister (or minister appointed as Interim Moderator by the Synod of the Presbytery) and the ruling Elders of the congregation. All members are entitled to propose, speak and exercise equal votes at meetings.

Meetings of the Session are held regularly throughout the year. The congregation holds an Annual General Meeting in January each year.

To be chosen for the office of the eldership in the congregation a person must be a 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 Session. Members of the Congregation vote on those proposed for the eldership.

### **Presbytery**

Under the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland form of governance, the corporate oversight of a congregation is the responsibility of a Presbytery which oversees the spiritual and temporal affairs of the congregations assigned to it by the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland. Clare Reformed Presbyterian Church is assigned to the Southern Presbytery of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland. The membership of the Presbytery consists of active and retired ministers of congregations assigned to the Presbytery and the Ruling Elders of each of the member congregations.

### **Synod**

The Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland is the supreme court of the Church, representing in one body the whole Church and acting on its supreme legislative, administrative and judicial authority, in dealing with all matters brought before it. The Synod is normally constituted in June for worship and to conduct its business. The membership of Synod consists mainly of the active ministers of each congregation, retired ministers and representative elders from the Session of each congregation.

## **DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE**

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

Clare Reformed Presbyterian Church is part of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Ireland (RPCI) established in 1811.

The RPCI believes in the triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit and that its members can enter into a relationship with that God through acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. That relationship is expressed through a range of activities.

The purpose of the RPCI is to support and advance the Christian Faith according to the Word of God as expressed in 'The Testimony' of the RPCI' the statement of faith. The Congregation is governed in accordance with the 'Book of Government and Order of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland'.

The following direct benefits flow from the organisations purpose

- The provision of churches as places of worship
- Public access to worship of a devotional nature
- Provision of a moral/ethical framework based on Biblical principles
- Opportunities for social interaction among members and with the public in general
- Encouragement to live and participate in and contribute to community life based on Christian principles.

These identified benefits can be easily demonstrated as the congregation provides a place for meeting and worship. These are open to all. Other benefits will be seen in the lives of people conforming more and more to the highest ethical and moral standards in accordance with the Christian faith. There is further benefit to the public as members interact with the communities in which they live and demonstrate the benefits of living according to Christian principles in consistent Christian Faith. Benefits can be demonstrated through the RPCI missionary and through the training of students for the Christian Ministry at the Reformed Theological College.

The weekly worship services, Bible study, prayer meetings are open to members and adherents and other members of the public who may wish to attend. Only those who meet the membership requirements of the denomination may participate in the observance of the Lord's Supper (Holy Communion).

## **ACTIVITIES AND PERFORMANCE**

The congregation met for public worship each Sunday morning, preceded by a prayer meeting, with an evening service held once a month. The evening service is held in conjunction with other churches within the Presbytery in which members of these congregations join in worship. All visitors are welcome to attend services.

The midweek meeting was held monthly, with other meetings as announced. The Sabbath School continued for the teaching of children in the congregation. A monthly Women's Bible Study began in January, meeting in the Manse. There was a Bible Club for children of primary school age held in the final week of June which was open to all children from the village and the surrounding district. The Men's Fellowship, too, met on several occasions throughout the year.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was observed on two occasions during the year.

Members of the congregation who were unable to attend church due to sickness or age are visited by the minister or one of the elders.

The congregation has also made the church and church hall building available to the presbytery and wider church for meetings and special services during the year.

The congregation was represented at the Southern Presbytery and Synod by the Minister and Ruling Elders.

## **PUBLIC BENEFITS STATEMENT**

The direct benefits flow from the purposes of the Church that include the gaining of and understanding in Christian beliefs as set out in the Word of God in the Bible and in accordance with the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland Code.

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).

These benefits are delivered locally by congregations and their members and are facilitated by presbyteries and centrally. Local delivery is facilitated by drawing on central resources. Public access is made known through the use of notice boards, printed material, websites, and in other ways.

The purpose does not lead to harm. The only private benefit flowing from our purpose is related to Ministers, Missionaries and Lay Agents who receive benefits as a result their holding office or employment. However, this is incidental and necessary in order to further our charitable purpose. There are no other private beneficiaries. The beneficiaries of this purpose are members, their families and other individuals that the Clare Reformed Presbyterian congregation, and the wider Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland is in direct or indirect contact with and the community in which pastoral services are provided.

The 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.

As a congregation we faithfully met our Targets of Honour set by Synod for the support of ministries in the wider Church, such as Mission work.

The Congregational Aid Fund of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland has agreed to contribute up to 50% of the minister's salary and pension contributions, dependent upon the capacity of the Congregation to contribute. In 2022 the Congregational Aid Fund paid 30% of the minister's salary.

The congregation is able to meet the cost of maintaining the buildings.

The buildings are in a very good state following the refurbishment of the church in 2000 and the construction of a new hall in 2014. The congregation has purchased a new-build bungalow in the village of Clare as a manse which was finally ready for occupation in late 2021. The final payment for the Manse of £111,802 was fully met in 2021

Total Income in the year was £37206.90

Total expenditure was £35321.46. The bulk of this was made up of the congregation's commitment to the Minister's salary of £29,370 with the Congregational Aid Fund contributing £12000.

#### **STATEMENT OF TRUSTEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Trustees are responsible for overseeing the preparation of the financial statements of the congregation in accordance with applicable law.

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 Session and signed on its behalf by:

Rev Peter Dundee

Minister

Richard Brown

Clerk of Session