

# Ballyclare Reformed Presbyterian Church Trustees Report 2022



Trustees report for Ballyclare Reformed Presbyterian Church for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022.

## **Charity Details**

Ballyclare Reformed Presbyterian Church  
Ballycorr Road  
Ballyclare  
County Antrim  
BT39 9DD

Charity Registration Number: NIC106337

## **Charity Trustees**

Mr Steven Bell  
Mr Alan Blackwell  
Mr Thomas Ferguson  
Rev Nathan Hawthorne  
Mr Keith McKeeman  
Mr Jonathan Stewart  
Mr George Wright

## **Principal office bearers**

Minister	Rev Nathan Hawthorne
Clerk of Session	Mr Steven Bell
Treasurer	Mr Andrew Morrison
Congregational Secretary	Mr Richard Chestnutt

## **Independent examiner**

Mr William McCollum

## **THANKFULNESS AFTER CHALLENGE**

We thank God that we were able to enjoy church life without the disruption and restrictions of the previous two years due to Covid.

We thank God for the thoughtfulness towards the needs, interests and concerns of others that was displayed by the congregation over the previous two years, as well as the support that was shown to Session in all the difficult decisions that were faced.

We thank God for the lessons he taught us over the past two years and a number of the measures we were forced to implement by the lockdowns and restrictions that prove beneficial to our congregational life and witness in the present. These have proved to be an on-going means of ministry.

## **SESSION**

Session met regularly throughout the year for the purposes of overseeing the work of the congregation and its members and adherents.

As well as the oversight of the congregation and its members and work, members of Session took it in turn to attend the meetings of the Eastern Presbytery and the meeting of Synod that was held in Armagh in June.

2 additional elders were elected, ordained and installed in 2022.

## **DEACONS**

The Deacons continued their work in managing the finances and property of the congregation and in overseeing the mercy ministry of the congregation, showing love and mercy to the church family and to those in need in Ballyclare and beyond.

2 additional deacons were elected, ordained and installed in 2022.

## **SABBATH SERVICES**

After the period of disruption due to Covid Sabbath morning and evening services continued uninterrupted in 2022, meeting at 11.00 am every Sabbath morning and 6.00 pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sabbath evenings of the month.

During 2022 Rev Hawthorne covered the following subjects in the course of his preaching ministry:

Over the year our pastor preached a number of series:

- Colossians chapters 2-4.
- The Eldership.
- The Deaconate.
- Psalms of Ascent – Psalms 120-134.

- A family like no other – looking at the family in which God placed his infant son.
- I need an answer – seeking to answer various questions people may have about God, faith, Christianity e.g. Is there a God? Can I believe the Bible? Do all religions not lead to God? How can a God of love allow so much suffering?

He also preached a number of stand-alone sermons:

- Esther 3:1-15 – Where is God in all this evil? (Ukraine war)
- 1 Peter 4:1-11 – Show hospitality to one another (Ukraine refugee crisis)
- Psalm 46 – When our world is shaken.
- Psalm 48 – The city of the great King.
- Psalm 100 – The Lord is God.
- 2 Chronicles 1 – Lessons for leaders of God's people.

Combined average attendance at morning worship services (in person and online) was 79. Combined average attendance at evening worship services (in person and online) was 57.

The sermons continue to be made available on the congregation's Youtube channel and advertised on Facebook.

## **SACRAMENTS**

The congregation celebrated the Lord's Supper in February, June and October in 2022.

For our communion season in February we studied Mark 14:27-42. There were 41 communicants.

For our communion season in June we studied Mark 14:43-65. There were 47 communicants.

For our communion season in October we studied Mark 14:66-15:20. There were 42 communicants.

We were delighted to administer the sacrament of baptism on one occasion in 2022.

## **PASTORAL CARE**

With restrictions due to Covid having been lifted the pastoral work of the congregation, elders and deacons returned to normal.

With the addition of 2 new elders the families of the congregation were re-distributed among the members of session for the purposes of pastoral care and oversight.

Members of the congregation continued to serve the community both in an individual capacity and in the support of wider community groups.

## **OUTREACH**

Our congregation seeks to share and relate the hope of the message of the gospel with those around us in various ways:

- By living out our Christian lives as individuals before family, friends, neighbours and the community of Ballyclare.
- By inviting people to our church services, youth work and other church activities.
- By engaging with the community as individuals and through our Friendship Group, our monthly nursing home services, the offer of group or personal bible study courses etc.

## **PRAYER & BIBLE STUDY**

The times of congregational prayer before morning and evening services resumed in 2022.

On Thursday evening the prayer meeting continued to meet in person and on Zoom over the course of the year.

The ladies and men's fellowship met monthly throughout the year both in person and over Zoom for bible study, prayer, and fellowship.

## **MISSION**

The congregation has a monthly missionary meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> Sabbath evening of each month to which representatives of missionary organisations are invited to bring updates on the work of their organisations.

The missionaries / missionary organisations invited to bring updates on their work included Acacia Path; United Grace Mission; Hamsayeh; Asia Link; CEF Macedonia; Mission Africa; One Mission Society – Mozambique; Sandes and EMF.

At our annual missionary service in November we received an update on the denomination's work in Nantes.

## **FELLOWSHIP**

The usual times of fellowship enjoyed by the congregation over the course of the year include:

- On Sabbath evenings a time of supper and fellowship is enjoyed after the evening service.
- Throughout the year a number of congregational meals are held following the morning service.
- Annual social events held during the course of the year included the barbecue in June and the Candlelight Supper in December.

## **MEN'S FELLOWSHIP**

Men of the congregation meet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of the month for times of Bible Study and Prayer and fellowship. These meetings took place both in person and over Zoom. In November the men went to the local Blythswood depot to help sort shoeboxes for Blythswood's annual Christmas shoebox appeal.

## **WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP**

The Women's Fellowship meet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of the month for times of Bible Study and Prayer and fellowship. These meetings took place both in person and over Zoom. In November the ladies went to the local Blythswood depot to help sort shoeboxes for Blythswood's annual Christmas shoebox appeal.

## **NURSING HOME SERVICES**

Our pastor continues, along with other pastors in the area, to provide services in 2 local nursing homes on Thursday afternoons.

## **FRIENDSHIP GROUP**

The Friendship Group meets on the last Tuesday morning of each month, from January to May and September to November.

The group is made up of retirees within the congregation and the community who meet once a month for friendship and fellowship.

An invited speaker delivers a talk on a subject of interest after which a 3-course lunch is served.

After a period of curtailment due to Covid the Friendship Group programme returned to normal in 2022.

The topics and speakers were as follows:

- January Life Story (Mrs Winnie McMaster)
- February Belsen Concentration Camp (Mr George Wright)
- March Flower Arranging (Pastor Keith Lindsey)
- April Fanny Crosby Hymn Writer (Mrs Eva Baxter MBE)
- September Young Lives Versus Cancer (Mrs Valerie Cubitt)
- October Grace Abounding (Dr Grace Pettigrew)
- November Life Below The Surface – An Aquatic Odyssey (Dr Richard Kennedy)

The average attendance for the six meetings was twenty-six.

In May for the annual outing the Friendship Group visited the White House, Newtownabbey, where we learned about the coming of King William III and his forces to Carrickfergus in 1690.

## **FOOTSTEPS**

Footsteps is the title for our Sabbath School, attended by young people from within our congregation and from the community.

Footsteps meets on Sabbath mornings at 10.00 am before the morning service.

Once again in November the children filled shoeboxes for Blythswood's annual shoebox appeal to people in situations of need.

## **CY (COVENANTER YOUTH)**

The junior and senior CYs, comprising young people from both within the congregation and outside the congregation meet together socially once a month on a Saturday evening, and then meet separately as junior and senior groups on the third Lord's Day of every month for a time of Bible study.

Over the course of the year social activities included a forest walk, ten-pin bowling, a trip to McDonalds and games in the church hall and in facilities provided by a family within the congregation.

Junior CY is for young people in Years 8-10 and had an average attendance of 11. Senior CY is for young people in Years 11+ and had an average attendance of 8.

## **JAM (JESUS AND ME)**

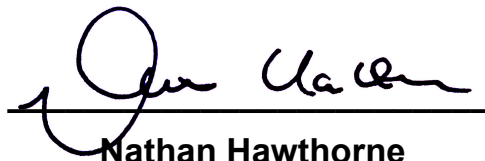
JAM, comprising children in Primary 1 to 7, meets on the first Saturday evening of the month.

The meetings consist of some games, followed by a memory verse, craft, story and some treats.

The theme this year was God's Family using Catherine McKenzie's children's book: *God's Family – The Greatest Royal Family Ever*.

**Approved by the Trustees at a meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2023 and signed on their behalf by:**

Minister

  
Nathan Hawthorne

Clerk

  
Steven Bell