

## **BELFAST FIRST CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE**

### **TRUSTEES' REPORT (FEBRUARY 2023)**

#### **TRUSTEE DETAILS**

Currently elected Trustees, as at 30.09.22:

Mr Stephen Anderson	Ms Tracy Mather
Mrs Lynne Duncan	Mrs Christine Molloy
Pastor Isabel Hamill	Mrs Lynn Myers
Mrs Lynda Heron	

**APPOINTMENT of TRUSTEES** is by election to Belfast First Church of the Nazarene Church Board, by the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the church. Trustees are elected to serve for a period of one year, with each Trustee retiring and being eligible for re-election each year.

In the absence of a full-time Pastor, and with the Associate Pastor having left his position at the end of May 2021, the Church Secretary, Mrs Lynn Myers, who is also an elected Trustee, has acted as chairperson of the Trustees.

Mr Stephen Anderson was re-elected to the position of Trustee at the AGM in February 2022 but, due to personal circumstances, resigned from this position in November 2022.

***In fulfilling the public benefit requirement, the Trustees have had regard to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's statutory public benefit guidance.***

#### **OUR PURPOSE**

In accordance with the global mission of the Church of the Nazarene, our purpose continues to be:

- To make Christ-like disciples in the nations;
- To advance God's kingdom by the preservation and propagation of Christian holiness, as set out in the Scriptures; and
- To serve as an instrument for advancing the kingdom of God, through the preaching and teaching of the gospel.

#### **OUR BENEFICIARIES**

We seek to benefit the general public, through serving the community in which we are placed. All church services and activities are open to members and non-members alike and we continue to actively encourage all members of the community to avail of the activities and ministries of the church.

## **RISK OF HARM AND PRIVATE BENEFIT**

We do not believe that there is any risk of harm, relevant to charity registration, arising from the activities of the church.

The only private benefit is to the any person employed as Pastor of the church (currently vacant) and to the full-time manager of the Hope Shop. Both of these receive a salary; these salaries are incidental and necessary to carry out the functions and purposes of the church.

## **SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES**

### LEADERSHIP / MINISTRY:

While we still seek to engage a full-time Pastor to lead the work of this congregation, the Lord has blessed us this year with the appointment of a part-time Interim Pastoral Support Worker, in the person of Mrs Isabel Hamill. Of course Isabel has never ceased to commit herself to the Lord's work in Belfast First church, in spite of the difficult road she has had to travel over the past two years. It was therefore with special delight that we welcomed Isabel into this more formal leadership role, in September 2022. In addition to her visitation ministry, we have been inspired by Isabel's preaching of God's Word this year and her continued leadership of the NMI. Furthermore, Isabel restarted the Ladies Fellowship meetings in October and has also taken on the role of Chairperson of the Hope Shop Management Committee. We pray the Lord's continued blessing on Isabel, as she leads the church forward in all these various aspects of ministry.

In addition, we were doubly blessed when, on 7<sup>th</sup> Feb this year, we received into membership Rev Ivan Miles and Mrs Isobell Miles, by transfer from Megain Memorial Church of the Nazarene. Although now officially in retirement, it seems that Rev Ivan has not slowed down at all but rather has stepped up to support us at a time of need, sharing his gift of preaching in church on a regular basis, alongside Pastor Isabel, and ministering to the various needs of families, especially in times of challenge and bereavement. We are forever indebted to you, Pastor Ivan!

The Church Board met formally on 10 occasions in the past year, with individuals working diligently to discharge their various responsibilities. We were sorry to lose Board member / Trustee Mr Stephen Anderson from our fellowship this year but we thank Stephen for all he did as a Trustee and friend over the years and we wish him God's blessing for the future.

### SERVICES / ACTIVITIES:

We have continued to meet each Sunday morning at 11.30am and on Wednesday evenings, for prayer and devotions, at 7.45pm. We have not yet recommenced a Sunday evening service since the pandemic but keep this under continual review.

In addition:

- We launched a weekly Good News Club for primary school age children, in October. This is led by CEF (Child Evangelism Fellowship), in partnership with the church and was a natural development of our links with CEF, developed during Pastor David's time and more recently, when we hosted CEF non-residential summer camps. Average weekly attendance at the Good News Club is 16 and it is a delight to see the children having fun, while learning more about God's Word;
- Return of the monthly Ladies fellowship meeting, on the first Thursday evening of each month;
- Church Newsletter continues to be produced by Karen Morrison, now bi-monthly (6 times per year);
- Special services were held for Easter, Alabaster and Harvest, as well as a very full Christmas programme. We enjoyed a children's nativity play and Christingle services, as well as our now customary Christmas musical presentation. There were refreshments served before all services in December, carol singing in the community and at Abbeylands Nursing Home, as well as an evening "Carols by Candlelight" service'.

#### HOPE SHOP:

The Hope Shop continues to be a blessing, both spiritually and practically, to our community. We are thankful to our shop manager, Mrs Shelly Rogers and the team of 14 volunteers, for all their hard work.

Highlights this year included:

- Thanksgiving service in the church in May, celebrating the ministry of the shop in the community. Many volunteers were present, as well as some customers;
- Macmillan coffee morning on 29.09.22 which raised £886.61;
- Christmas sale, from 14<sup>th</sup> December;
- Thought for the Month on Facebook page;
- Bulletin board in shop, along with prayer box and Gospel Tracts.

The shop was able to make donations this year to 12 different registered charities, who each received £300, as well as gifts being given to a local baby bank. Charities who received donations were – Light House, RNLI, Women's Aid, Inspire, Cancer Fund for Children, Prostate Cancer UK, AA Veterans Support, St John's Cadets, PDSA animal hospital, Smile Train, Tiny Life and Kids4School.

Without a doubt, we can see how God is using the Hope Shop and we look forward to seeing what else He has planned for this ministry.

#### CHURCH MEMBERSHIP:

We have been delighted in recent days to welcome 7 new members into our church fellowship – two by transfer from another Nazarene church and five by profession of faith. Sadly we have also lost 5 members since last year – one by transfer to another Nazarene church, two by personal request and two by promotion to Glory. The

membership of the church currently stands at 43, an increase of two from last year. In addition, there are 20 regular church attenders who are not members and a total of 15 children on our register. The average church attendance over the past year, at Sunday services, is 51.

We mourned the passing of two much-loved church members this year – Mr Jackie Salters, in November 2022 and Mrs Annie Cooke, just a few days after Christmas. We are thankful to the Lord for bringing Annie and Jackie to our fellowship through the years and for their witness and friendship to us all. We continue to remember the Salters and Cooke families in the days ahead and pray they will know God's peace and comfort.

## **BUILDING / PREMISES**

We continue to do our best to ensure our church premises are maintained to a high standard. During this period, while we are not paying a full-time Pastor's salary, we have taken opportunity to use some of our finances to have the interior of the church painted. Although the painting is done, there are a few more aspects of redecorating which we will continue to take forward, our priority being completion of the Hamill Room, in memory of Pastor David. We intend to formally dedicate the room in the coming months.

As well as the painting of the church, other repair and maintenance work undertaken during this past year has included:

- Clearance and repair of the underground sewage pipes from the toilets in the church hall, to address a long-term problem;
- Replacement of flush handle of the Gents toilet in the church hall;
- Repairs to the roof of the church hall and one of the skylights, following a period of repeated vandalism by a small group of young people in the local area, over the summer;
- Cleaning of gutters and clearance of moss from the hall roof;
- Repairs to guttering at various points around the building;
- Cleaning of the high skylights in the church hall, inside and out;
- Updating / replacement of the electricity supply box in church hall by NIE;
- Clearing of weeds around church grounds;
- Annual inspection and servicing of all fire equipment.

The Church Board was delighted in August when a team of young people from Nazarene Youth UK (NYUK) who were running a holiday bible club in Megain Church sent a team to help with some maintenance work in our church. Four young people worked with some of our own members for several hours, to clear and clean the Joy Sunday School Room. Feedback was that the young people were a delight and promised to visit again soon. The two large sofas were removed from the Joy room and donated to local charities.

An ongoing maintenance issue which we are making every effort to address is the electrical fault in the sanctuary toilets. One of the electrical circuits is continually tripping, meaning we are without light in the men's, ladies' and disabled toilets. We apologise for the inconvenience this issue is causing but please be assured it is not through lack of effort – we will continue to try to have the issue resolved as soon as possible.

We continue to seek to serve the local community by allowing our hall and facilities to be used regularly by three community groups - We Slim Together (Monday evenings), Slimming World (Tuesday evenings and Saturday mornings) and the Ulster Military Historical Society – a group of retired gentlemen who meet in our premises on the first Saturday afternoon of each month.

We remain so thankful for our church cleaner, Claire Onur, who does a fantastic job and goes the extra mile to help us in lots of different ways. Claire's mum Alison Scott is also a great help, standing in for Claire if she is on holiday or being an extra pair of hands when needed. We truly appreciate their hard work.

We are also indebted to Richard Doherty, not only for his help in dealing with the vandalism issue a few months ago but also for putting the bins in and out every week, fixing blinds, changing bulbs, replacing batteries ... and just about anything else that needs done around the place!

## **FINANCES**

Details of the church finances are set out in the financial report. Thank you to each and every one of you who continues to give your tithes and offerings sacrificially to the work of the church. The faithful giving from such a small group of people is nothing short of amazing.

You will see from the financial report that our accounts are extremely healthy at the present time – and how amazing it has been to enjoy our first full year of being debt free, following our building loans being settled in full in December 2021. We paid all of our District Budgets in full, for the year ended 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022. We praise the Lord for His goodness, His faithfulness and His provision.

As always, the Trustees would like to thank everyone who helps in any way with the management of our church finances, including Mrs Julie Anderson, our Hope Shop treasurer – also those who stay behind after every service to count offerings and make up lodgements - Susan Mather, Christine Molloy, Susan Harrison and Lynne Duncan. You are all stars and thank you for your faithfulness. We are delighted to have Alesha Alex recently joining the counting team – Alesha is always so willing to help in any way she can and we are grateful to her for stepping forward to do this job.

The church continues to claim tax back from HMRC through Gift Aid and the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme (GASDS) where possible.

## **LOOKING FORWARD**

We fix our eyes on Jesus and continue to do our utmost to live for Him and serve Him faithfully, to show His love and salvation to the people of our community.

This report has been approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf:

Respectfully Submitted,

Ms Tracy Mather

(Trustee and Church Treasurer)

February 2023