

Ballycrochan Baptist Church
Report of the Trustees
for the year ended 31 December 2023

The trustees present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2023. The trustees have adopted the provisions of 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 2019).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Acknowledging the headship of Christ over his church the members of the Church unite to glorify the God of the Scriptures by maintaining and promoting His worship both individually and corporately, by devoting themselves to the teaching of Scripture, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer and in evangelism.

The principal charitable object of the church is the advancement of the Christian faith according to the teachings of Scripture, the Doctrinal Statement and Baptist principles.

The activities carried out by the church include:

- Holding regular services for public worship, prayer, Bible study, preaching and teaching for all age groups;
- Providing pastoral care to the members of the church through visitation and prayer;
- Organising meetings and events that promote our charitable purpose;
- Participating in the life of the local community;
- Supporting other Christian organisations and charities through volunteering, financial gifts and prayer.

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

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OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Public benefit

Throughout the year we continued with many activities that were of direct benefit to our members and the community.

Missions

The Missions Team seeks each year to encourage missionary interest within Ballycrochan Baptist, and to take responsibility for the Church Missionary Calendar.

In February a Baptist Missions worker from Belturbet came along with his family to tell us about the ongoing work in the town. This included his Grandfather, Grandmother, Father, Mother, his wife, and their 3 boys. It was amazing to have 4 generations of the one family present with us.

In March we held our Tearfund Day. At the morning service we learnt of the ongoing work and needs of Tearfund, followed by a light lunch.

Later in the Spring we were privileged to host the Director of Baptist Missions and our local Scripture Union worker.

August provides an opportunity to meet many missionaries attending the Bangor Worldwide Missionary Convention. This year we had a speaker from Fireblade Ministries who told us about their involvement with the Motorbike circuits and sharing God's word with the bikers.

At our Missions Sunday in October, we had a speaker from 100 Fold (a ministry of UFM Worldwide) and in the evening the Pastor from Blackrock Baptist Church in Dublin. We had a great day and finished with a light supper following the evening service. We also took on a project for a team working in the Carumas Valley Peru with Baptist Missions. The response to this was terrific and they were able to get all of the video projection equipment that they needed.

Our God is a missionary God and as a local church we are entrusted with the responsibility to share His work of mission by keeping ourselves informed, being constant in PRAYER, GIVING and REACHING OUT with the Good News of the Gospel.

Evangelism

The year commenced with Pastor Neil and Pastor Benji facilitating a three week Hope Explored course which started in March. Hope Explored presents the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. There was a good number of church and non-church folk attending each of the sessions, which were encouraging and enjoyable.

The Great Easter Adventure took place on Saturday 25th March for all primary-aged children and was a great success with 75 children attending. Klass Kids from Crown Jesus Ministries partnered in this special event with us to reach into our community with the Gospel. The Klass Kids team have such an energy and commitment to serve at these special events with the aim of reaching children that church does not already minister to. The team provided a lively programme of singing, craft, games, puppets and a clear presentation of the Easter Story. The children appeared attentive and enjoyed the programme along with some Easter treats.

In October we had a 'Bible Heroes' kids' service. It was great to have a speaker from Scripture Union E3 come along and speak to the kids about her Bible Hero Joshua! The kids enjoyed the songs, quiz and Bible story, before everyone headed over to the hall for some refreshments and craft.

As a church we reached out in December to help struggling families in our local community to celebrate Christmas. We gathered donations for two charities, the Salvation Army and The Warehouse (Newtownards). Our donations were greatly appreciated by both charities as they were under great pressure to meet rising demands from families in need.

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On the first and third Friday of each month a group from the church meet in Bangor at 11am with the purpose of sharing the Gospel with the people of Bangor, whether through gospel tracts and/or through conversations that may come along. It is a time of absolute joy and privilege to serve God in this way, in our home city and to get to know some fascinating people and share the gospel.

Café Connect

The Cafe Connect ministry commenced last year and takes place on the last Friday of the month in the Foyer from 10am to 11.30am with good coffee, food and chat! This is a drop in cafe for all our church family and for people in our community, providing a relaxed opportunity to get to know people better.

Baptist Women

Our aim in BWF is to provide a time for ladies in our church to meet for mutual encouragement and fellowship. We meet one Tuesday night per month and feedback about this year's meetings has reinforced how much our ladies appreciate this time together. We are delighted that this year has seen the reintroduction of the Tuesday morning Pulse meetings, and we are grateful to those that have taken on the lead for this important ministry.

We were blessed to begin our 23/24 programme with the September breakfast and were delighted to welcome a speaker from Baptist Missions who shared her testimony and news about the work in Belturbet. In October we welcomed a Consultant Anaesthetist who volunteers with the Mercy Ships organisation, which provides people living in Africa with access to life changing surgeries.

In November we were treated to a wreath making workshop when we learned of the significance of wreath making and turned our thoughts towards Christmas. December was our Christmas outing for a very enjoyable meal at a local restaurant to finish the year.

Pulse

Ephesians 4v2: "Be completely humble and gentle, be patient, bearing with one another in love."

A new group for women commenced in September 2023, meeting on one Tuesday morning each month from September to May. It has been named "Pulse" as we have a heart for one another and our church family. We have had 16 to 25 coming along and we have fun, fellowship, prayer for our church, and a time of encouragement in a very informal setting.

Connect

Connect is a fellowship group for families, couples and young (and not so young!) adults that come to our church, to help them connect and support one another.

The group met up several times throughout the year for food and fellowship with opportunities to bring along friends and family members. This year our events have included a coastal path walk and BBQ, a picnic at Ward Park, indoor games and Ten Pin Bowling.

Toddlers

Every Wednesday during term time we welcome about 30 adults and 35 tots into the hall for an hour and a half.

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Painting, craft, sand, play dough, books, jigsaw puzzles, toy kitchen, toy garage, see saw, slide, dolls' prams and ride on bikes and cars keep the tots amused and give their parents, grannies or carers a chance for a break and a chat. The morning finishes with "sing time" and a jelly baby!

Again, this year we have several families who have come to live in Bangor from overseas and also many carers who have been coming for a long time with each new generation of babies and toddlers.

At Easter and again at Christmas the children received a book and some chocolate. We have appreciated Neil's mini talks to the tots and a visit from Santa to give out the presents.

As a team of helpers, we are keen to make both adults and children feel really welcome in our church.

Star Kids

2023 has been a fantastic year in Star Kids Club and we reflect on it with positivity. Over the last couple of years we have bid farewell to two sizeable groups of P7 children, nine in total, who are now enjoying being part of the Equip ministry for young people in years 8-10. We are delighted that the Equip team is able to provide this vital ministry and our children have a really clear pathway to support them on their walk with God after they leave us. While we are always a little sad to say goodbye to our P7s, we have also been thrilled to welcome a number of new children to Star Kids Club. Since September we have welcomed four new children to SKC and we are so pleased that they are joining us regularly on a Sunday morning.

Having commenced our new 'Mustard Seeds' materials in September 2022 when we began our walk through Genesis, we started with the story of Jacob in January 2023, and steadily made our way through the early books of the Old Testament. During 2023 we have learnt about many key figures, such as Jacob & Esau, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, Caleb, Joshua and Samson. We even learnt about some less familiar characters such as Gideon and Ehud and have enjoyed the valuable lessons from these early parts of the Old Testament. We deviated from the programme at times to focus on important lessons from the Easter and Christmas stories as well as taking time to think about key times of the year for the children. It was a great opportunity to think about our relationship with God and his love for us when we experience change, particularly at the end of a school year and the beginning of another, which can sometimes be a difficult transition for our children. We really enjoyed the support materials from Scripture Union NI for these special sessions.

We have a terrific and dedicated team of teachers and it is an absolute joy to see everyone working so well together in their service to the children and to this ministry.

Equip

The aim of EQUIP is prepare young people in the Year 8 - Year 10/11 category for sermons on a Sunday, to understand the basics of the Christian faith and to grow in that understanding to a level that the Sunday sermon won't be difficult to follow and understand but rather is something that becomes a natural extension of their studies in EQUIP.

From April to June the young people finished off our Mustard Seeds study on 10 key doctrines of the Christian Faith which included such topics as:

- What is the Bible?
- What is the Trinity?
- What is Sin?
- What is a Christian?

These studies, along with the others in the series, proved very useful for the young people in grounding them in the core teachings of the Bible and created plenty of discussion, interaction, and questions.

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September saw an influx of new young people into Equip to double our numbers with weekly attendance consistent and encouraging. The group dynamic is fantastic with lots of chat, fun, interaction, and friendships being built. The young people have created their own WhatsApp group to encourage and fellowship with each other and we are reliably informed that a verse of the day gets posted each day.

The studies since September have been working through the book of Ephesians using the Mustard Seeds materials and have seen us study topics such as One Plan, One Faith, One People, One Body, One Lifestyle and One Battle. The studies have, as before, been extremely encouraging, challenging and engaging.

Our group of leaders has expanded this year, for which we are very grateful, providing opportunities for different approaches to our studies which for the young people keeps things interesting and varied, but all the while consistent with the teaching materials.

Ignite

Ignite began the year with a small group of young people (secondary school age and beyond), yet it has been a privilege to see God working in their lives over the last while. Meeting regularly for Bible Study we have been greatly encouraged as the young people have engaged well in these studies, offering interpretations of the text, and been willing to ask big questions.

This year though has been a year of transition for Ignite. We have been operating with a small group of young people, mostly at the latter end of secondary school, many of them have finished school and moved into university or work. As we consider the years ahead, we have had some encouraging meetings involving a few of the younger young people coming through our church, and it was a blessing to see them getting involved in discussion groups. It has also been a wonderful encouragement to see the growth in our older young people, and it is our prayer that this will continue in the next few years as they transition out of school into whatever avenue they choose to pursue.

Campaigners

Every new year brings new opportunities and new challenges. 2023, while following the usual pattern, brought new opportunities to reach young people and their families for the Lord.

The Scripture exam in January saw Clansmen study some of the Miracles that Jesus performed and learn portions of Psalm 100. The Family Service on 12th March saw everyone who took part, receive their reward.

Our thoughts then turned to preparation for the Display with the theme of "Into Orbit." This theme was originally planned for the display of 2020! The Campaigner year drew to a close with a very enjoyable Display with the Awards presented by the Development Officer for Campaigners NI.

The AGM was held in May when plans were made for the 2023-24 session which marks the 40th year of Campaigners in Ballycrochan Baptist Church.

Campaigners resumed in September after the summer break for the 2023-24 session with two major events planned. In October, Ballycrochan played host to Eagles Clans from Bangor Elim and Newtownards Elim and Ballycrochan for the District Eagles' Fun Day. Approximately 35 Eagles enjoyed a variety of activities with Clan 'C' provided by "The Monkey Man".

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Campaigner Sunday in November was a very special event which marked 40 years of Campaigners at Ballycrochan. The theme was "Jesus is King" and our speaker was the Chairman of Campaigner Council. At the conclusion of the service the birthday cake was cut. Many of the congregation joined for lunch in the church hall; it was lovely to enjoy fellowship with so many visitors. We owe huge thanks to everyone that helped to organise the event.

As 2023 drew to a close, we had the usual round of Christmas parties and our "special visitor" excelled himself. Thank you, Santa.

Thank you to all the Chiefs and Assistant Leaders in Campaigners who give of their times and talents so willingly so that Monday nights can happen. We thank God for the Clansmen in our care and ask for His continuing guidance and wisdom as we face the challenges. We thank God for the opportunities that we have to tell of His saving power.

Community Service

In addition to our usual activities, we have continued hosting the NI Blood Transfusion Service at our buildings several times during the year. It has been a great privilege to provide this support to our local community and health service and we look forward to welcoming them again in 2024.

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

"My heart is filled with thankfulness"

As we reflect upon our 41st year as Ballycrochan Baptist Church, we do so with the attitude of gratitude. The Lord has been so good to us, His grace really is sufficient for every need and His faithfulness knows no limit!

One of the encouragements of the past year has been the little signs that God has been working in the lives of a number of people who are not yet believers. It is lovely to see people asking important questions and seeking answers in their lives. Conversations and opportunities continue. We are very thankful for the Friday morning team who engage people in spiritual conversations in our city centre. Please pray that we will see folk coming to faith in Jesus and entering God's family.

Another rich encouragement has been seeing new people coming along to our church. Newcomers have enriched church life and it is lovely to make new friends. Some have been attending our midweek prayer meetings and Small Groups; our times of fellowship around an open Bible are favourite times of the week in church. There is plenty of room for more people to come. It is mutually beneficial to us all.

Our sincere thanks to all who faithfully serve the Lord in lots of different ways within the church family. We are very thankful for the deep sense of unity of heart and purpose that we have at present in Ballycrochan. Let's continue to guard and keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. By this everyone will know that we belong to Jesus!

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

The charity is controlled by its governing document, a deed of trust and constitutes an unincorporated charity.

Approved by order of the board of trustees on 9 April 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



Mr A Cole - Trustee