

WHITEWELL METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE

TRUSTEES' REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 30 September 2023.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the church's trust deed, the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 and "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)" (as amended for accounting periods commencing from 1 January 2019)

Objectives and activities

The unchanging objective of the church is to continue to proclaim, promote and further spread the Christian faith as defined in the pages of the Bible. Our beliefs, precepts and practises are defined and decided, not by the words or decrees of men but, by the Word of God which we hold to be the highest authority, being the unvarnished and inspired Word of the God.

The main activities of the church, in order to achieve the above are the holding of regular religious services each week, the providing of youth activities and the broadcasting of our services along with the provision of services of a charitable benefit to the community and abroad.

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

The Unsung Heroes

As always we are so very grateful to God for the fantastic giving of our congregation that allows us to employ a number of people to help with our ministry and it is only right we pay tribute to the great army of volunteers who faithfully labour behind the scenes.

These faithful souls do all kinds of things from driving buses, leading youth activities, car park duty, cleaning, playing instruments, leading worship, fund raising, door to door witnessing, operating cameras to provide our on-line services, welcoming people at the doors, visiting the housebound and providing crèche facilities. The whole church functions and works because so many people play an important, sometimes unseen part. 1Corinthians 15:58 *"Always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as you know, that our labour is not in vain in the lord."* Thank you, thank you, thank you everyone.

Achievements and performance

The recent Covid pandemic changed the religious landscape & although it hasn't went away most church services and activities have returned to a pre Covid situation although there is still a measure of 'social distancing' in place regarding seating. Some people with underlying health concerns continue to prefer to watch the services on-line.

The plus side of the on-line ministry is the increasing number of viewers we have from all over the UK and around the world. People regularly view from the USA, Australia, Africa and New Zealand. A few congregations, who don't have a minister meet together to watch our on-line services. Others who have no suitable church near them regard Whitewell as their church and we even have enquiries about the possibility of being on-line members of Whitewell which is something we are considering.

The Word of the Lord is certainly sounding forth from Whitewell and it is a humbling privilege to be able to minister to so many.

Over the months our church services (worship and Word) have been good and people continue to come to faith in Christ. There has been approximately 30 people of all ages undergoing the ordinance of believers baptism, 12 baby dedications and 16 new converts completing the new converts course.

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FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

Notable events throughout the year

- In October Pastors David and Shaw visited and ministered at a church in Northamptonshire who have asked us to supply them with their next minister from our Academy. We also held a memorial service to remember church members and loved one's of church members who had passed away due to the Covid pandemic.
- In November a 'Remembrance Service' was held which also accommodated the enrolment of our Girl's Brigade and Scouts. We also held our annual Christmas Fare with a wealth of stalls and activities. It was revamped from previous years and held in the larger youth centre premises and was brilliantly supported and the money raised used to help needy families over the Christmas period.
- In December we hosted the annual Christmas dinner in church for our 'senior members' with a short program afterwards and each one leaving with a gift from 'Father Christmas.' There was also the annual community Carol Service which is always brilliantly attended.
- In January we commenced the new year with a week of prayer, and Pastors David and Frankie visited our missionary endeavours in Ethiopia and Kenya. The staff were encouraged to see them and a good report was brought home to the Whitewell congregation continuing to justify our financial investment there.
- In February the church celebrated its 66th anniversary with pastor Nick Cassidy from Cork preaching all day.
- In March our Shepherd's Academy hosted an 'Answers In Genesis' day an apologetic ministry known worldwide and it was so successful, we have been asked to repeat it next year.
- In April after 3 days of prayer and fasting the church held a healing service for the purpose of praying for the sick. Also major renovation and building work commenced on the foyer area and main front and rear entrances. This was the first time since the opening of the church this area of the church was enhanced. All agree it is a fabulous job. A 'Gift Day' was held to cover this necessary building work. A few of our students from the academy accompanied by a pastor visited churches in Northamptonshire and Yorkshire. This provided a great deal of valuable experience for students who may be contemplating the ministry themselves.
- In May the church hosted its first 'Men's Conference' with 4 different speakers which again was well attended. On the back of this a new 'Men's Fellowship' also commenced meeting together one night every six weeks for fellowship.
- In June the Ethiopia team hosted a 'Southern Gospel' concert to raise funds for the important Ethiopian missionary project. There was also the 2nd academy meal for our Shepherds academy students, and a Youth Mission was held in a marquee in Donaghadee which saw our youth lead the services and many local people attended.
- In July the Elim Pentecostal Church held their annual 'Wonderous Conference' at our church for 4 days and nights. So pleased have the leaders of Elim been that they are asking that this becomes an annual event. A Holiday Bible Club for children was also hosted with many children attending.
- On the 19th August saw the church put on a free event of a church BBQ and Funday at Crawfordsburn County Park. A host of activities were put on to cater for all. It was a wonderful time. In August we also held another week of prayer in preparation of our September Mission event and also undertook a large scale distribution of invites to homes over a considerable area over a three week period. This work was done by our church members.
- In September our Shepherd's Academy commenced its 3rd year with many students returning as well as a new intake of students. The first day back included a lunch for all. The church also put on our major evangelistic endeavour of the year that we call, 'Alive Belfast' over 4 nights. David Ham from New York was our speaker and a tremendous time was had with many people from other churches also present.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

Other Activities

- Our many children's activities include, Scouts and Girl's Brigade, Children's church or 'Weewellers' on Sunday mornings and there is also a children's church during the Sunday evening service.
- Our two missionary projects each have a team of volunteers at Whitewell helping with fund raising and practical support 12 months of the year and a special Christmas appeal sees money sent for the African children to also receive a Christmas gift.
- God's precious Word continues to be preached week after week with our senior minister who is responsible for preaching and teaching delivering new series of sermons for the spiritual growth of the believers individually and the church collectively. During the year he has brought series on '*The 10 commandments*' and '*The miraculous ministry of the Lord Jesus*' and '*the Tabernacle in the wilderness*' and '*A book and a woman, both called Esther*' and '*Getting the gospel right*' and a series on the subject of Bible prophecy.
- Two other ministries that continue to make a difference are:
 - The street project to the homeless, 'Manna for Many' run by Stanley Donaghey.
 - Our food hamper ministry run by a lady called Jewel which brings food to needy families.

The Shepherd's Academy

Back in September 2021, Whitewell opened it's very own Bible college called 'the Shepherd's Academy' for the purpose of producing a new generation of church leaders and workers for the church. Now into our 3rd academic year the academy has grown beyond our dreams with nearly 200 students enrolled. Many of these are from other churches inside and outside of Northern Ireland.

Lead by pastor David Purse with the help of an academy board the academy has students of all ages. Some just want to learn more about the faith but others are studying to obtain our own church based 'Diploma in Pastoral and Biblical Studies.' Our academy is growing pastors and elders and church workers for the present as well as the future. Two couples who have completed the 'pastoral care' module now help with the church visitation program of those who are elderly or house bound.

It is our prayer that the academy will not only secure Whitewell's future but also be able to assist other churches. This is a project the trustees and oversight are very encouraged about.

Ethiopia & Kenya

The Church has founded and continues to support a number of foreign missionary projects in Ethiopia and Kenya. These missions help relieve severe poverty in the local areas by assisting in the provision of food and clothing. The missions also help provide religious and secular education to the children and adults of the area and also assists in providing medical care.

The Church currently funds three project in Ethiopia; Kuriftu Compound, Babagaya School & Church, and Ambo Church. The Church also funds the Metropolitan Sanctuary and Nyeri Church in Kenya.

Hundreds of lives are being touched in both locations as well as the project employing over 50 individuals. We continue to say 'to God be the glory'.

Ethiopia

Our Church, Schools and Clinics at Kuriftu, Bobagaya, and Ambo continue to support the needy children, their families and the local community in the surrounding villages of Bishoftu, Ethiopia. Our main assistance is to bring Christianity to all children from different ethnic religions through evangelism and the provision of biblically-based teaching, and to advance the education of all children and young adults in the relief of poverty and hunger, bringing an holistic approach to help the people in these areas in their spiritual, educational and physical needs. The Metropolitan Tabernacle Church in Ethiopia serves the local community in reaching souls and where we have seen God's plans come to fruition over the many years.

The missionary project in Ethiopia is growing strong and vibrant. It continues to be supported at home by Mrs Eleanor McClelland and her daughter Karen along with Pastor Michael Bunting.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

Kenya

The Metropolitan Sanctuary for Children with Disability continued to offer services during the year under the leadership of Pastor Mary Whaom and her dedicated team.

During the year the sanctuary offered rehabilitation services and organised training for Community Health Volunteers and for care givers in the community. Sitting aids, standing aids, stabilisers and wheelchairs were given to children in need. The sanctuary also provided social support through the provision of food packages and transport. Medical assistance, support for families bereaved and home visits were also provided by the sanctuary staff.

The Church, through the sanctuary, continues to reach out to the local community. The Kenya missionary project is continuing to be strong and vibrant, supported at home by Pastor Frankie Weir.

Financial review

The Board of Trustees consider that the unrestricted funds of the charity have sufficient resources and assets available which are adequate to fulfil their obligations.

At 30 September 2023 the balance of unrestricted reserves was £7,712,987 (2022 - £7,801,926).

It is the policy of the church that unrestricted funds which have not been designated for a specific use should be maintained at a level equivalent to between six and nine month's expenditure. The trustees considers that reserves at this level will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue the church's current activities while thought is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised. This level of reserves has been maintained throughout the year.

The trustees have assessed the major risks to which the church is exposed, and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate exposure to the major risks.

Structure, governance and management

The church is constituted as trustees incorporated as a body and was established by a charitable trust deed.

The trustees who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

Pastor David Purse

Mr Charles Purse

Pastor Robert Higgins

Mr Alan Cartwright

Mr Derek McIlveen

(Appointed 19 December 2023)

(Appointed 19 December 2023)

The Oversight of the church have, by resolution at a meeting of same, the power to appoint new trustees. There are 5 trustee positions on the trustee board. We hold that there ought to be more non paid trustees than employed trustees.

Finally, for all we are able to do to serve one another and beyond the walls of our church we ultimately say, Sola Deo Gloria, 'Glory to God alone'.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2023

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

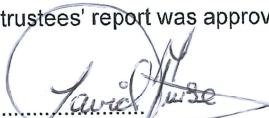
The law applicable to charities in Northern Ireland requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the church and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the church for that year.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP 2015 (FRS 102);
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the church and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act Northern Ireland (2008), the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015 and the provisions of the trust deed. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the church and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees' report was approved by the Board of Trustees.



Pastor David Puse
Trustee

Dated: 25/3/24