

WHITEWELL METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE

TRUSTEES' REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2024

The trustees present their annual report and financial statements for the year ended 30 September 2024.

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 said church began in February 1957 with the objective of proclaiming, promoting and spreading the Christian faith as defined and set forth in the Bible and we continue to fulfil that original objective. Our beliefs, precepts and practises are defined and decided, not by the words and decrees of men, but by the Word of God which we continue to hold to be the highest authority, being the unvarnished and inspired Word of God.

The chief activities of the church, in order to achieve the above, are the holding of regular Christian services each week, the providing of youth activities and the broadcasting of our services 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.

Achievements and performance

Over the months our church services have been good with people coming to faith in Christ. There have been some 12 people of all ages undergoing the ordinance of believers baptism, 6 baby dedications and 29 new converts completing our new converts '*Genesis Course*.' There were also 5 weddings performed.

We have noticed attendance at our midweek services increasing and an increase in those who avail themselves of our on-line services throughout the UK and abroad in places as far off as the USA, Kenya, Ethiopia, Australia and New Zealand. A few churches who do not have their own minister now meet to watch our services and we now also have people for whom Whitewell has become their church, and they are '*on-line members*.' This is a wonderful and exciting development.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2024

Notable events throughout the year

- In October, the 'Christian Institute' brought a presentation on issues affecting Christians in today's society and the church hosted a gospel concert by the popular Christian singer Kari Job.
- In November, there was an annual enrolment service for our 230th Girls Brigade and 112th Scout companies. There was also an Act of Remembrance for Remembrance Sunday. The church Christmas Fayre also took place drawing hundreds and was very well attended.
- In December, our annual Senior Members Christmas dinner was held with over 200 in attendance. Each one took home a Christmas giftbag. There was also a Christmas musical in church, carol singing in Belfast City Centre and the very popular Christmas Carol Service and the Watchnight service on 31st seeing out the old year and welcoming in the new.
- In January, the Ethiopia support team along with Pastor F. Weir and Pastor M. Bunting visited our missionary projects in both Ethiopia and Kenya bringing back a glowing report of many lives being touched and impacted for good. In Kenya, the pastors also ordained to the ministry a young man (Jacob) to pastor the church in the town of Neyri.
- In February, the church celebrated its 67th anniversary with pastor John MacInnes from the Kilmarnock church being our visiting speaker.
- In March, our academy hosted an 'Answers In Genesis' conference which again was well attended and Easter was celebrated with Good Friday and Easter Sunday services as usual, well supported.
- In April our Academy took some 35 students on a short trip to Berlin and Wittenburg in Germany. This was to do with the academy studies on Martin Luther and his involvement in the Reformation. What a fantastic time the students had calling on the Academy to organise a similar trip.
- In May, after 35 years of full-time ministry as a pastor at Whitewell, Pastor Michael Bunting who was a very popular pastor in church retired. The church honoured him and his wife with a farewell gift in church as the congregation stood to applaud after his short speech.
- In June, the Shepherds Academy concluded its 3rd year of studies. There was a wonderful end of term annual dinner and awards night with over 120 in attendance and the following night at church 34 of our students, after 3 years study received their 'Diplomas in Pastoral and Biblical Studies' and it is great to see them taking on roles and responsibilities in the church. Truly the academy is living up to its motto, 'Equipping the saints for ministry.'
- In July, the Tabernacle played host to the Elim Pentecostal annual 'Wonderous' event for 4 days of worship, ministry of the word and fellowship.
- In August, we also put on our Annual Fun Day and BBQ at Crawfordsburn Country Park where there was fun and fellowship for some 600 to 700 people. This was a free event just for the church to get together. A superb day was enjoyed by all.
- In September, our Academy began its 4th year with the introduction of a new 1 year 'Foundation Course' which is really New Testament introduction. What interest there was as nearly 200 students enrolled, some of them participating online due to being from outside Northern Ireland. Some of the students come from other churches but are most welcome. We also opened our first branch of the Academy in Kilmarnock, Scotland, overseen by Pastor John MacInnes and his wife. We are also looking into the possibility of a branch of the Academy in Kenya.
- We also held our great evangelistic mission again, 'Alive Belfast' with visiting evangelist Pastor David Ham from 'Soul Cry Church' in New York. Prior to the actual event a week of prayer was held as well as 1,000s of leaflet invitations delivered to many homes and who will forget the wonderful prayer meeting held on top of 'Cave Hill' as we prayed over our city. This was possibly our best Alive Belfast event with excellent attendance and people coming to faith. The event also involved an open- air service in Belfast City Centre on the Saturday afternoon.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2024

Other Activities

- Throughout the year many other activities are run and take place on a weekly basis from Girl's Brigade to Boys Scouts, Children's Church at both Sunday morning and evening services. The 'Well' which is a Saturday night event for older youth and now a new 'Junior Well' for children aged 8 to 15 since the end of August.
- 'Befrienders' is a ministry to disabled people bringing them to church and providing supper for them after Sunday evening service.
- 'Grief Share' is a support ministry for those who have suffered the loss of a loved one. There is also various men's and women fellowship groups as well as leaflet distribution and gospel tract distribution teams. Fundraising for our missionary projects and children's Bible clubs held during school holiday breaks.
- 'Manna For Many' is a team of volunteers who minister to those living on the streets of our city providing hot food, sleeping bags and outdoor clothing. A second group of church folk also do a similar work.
- The church enables a 'Hampers Ministry' also where needy people and families receive food hampers when needed. This is especially needed at Christmas time with toys for needy children also being given.
- There is also a 'Safeguarding Team' that ensures those who work with children and young adults are safe to do so and they are on hand to provide any guidance and support to volunteer workers.

The Rope Holders

When the life of the newly converted Saul of Tarsus was being sought by the enemies of Christianity in Damascus, that Saul escaped by being let down over the city wall in a basket. This allowed him to fulfil his mission of spreading the gospel throughout the Mediterranean world and eastern Europe, but it only happened because of a small group of anonymous people who held the rope that lowered him safely to the ground.

So much happens in Whitewell and its many ministries, but it wouldn't happen if it wasn't for those who week after week faithfully hold the rope that enables the work to be done.

Choir and worship leaders, musicians and singers, minibus drivers, car park attendants, volunteer cleaners and helpers and maintenance workers. Sunday night supper providers and Wednesday night coffee bar servers after the Bible study. Sound and camera and video operators, security operators, stewards and deacons and elders and pastors. Various boards that run departments greasing the wheels to enable Whitewell to run smoothly to fulfil its mission.

We acknowledge and would thank the 'Whitewell Rope Holders' for all that they do. Often they work behind the scenes doing what few are aware of and yet is so vital in the grand scheme of things. Thank you again, one and all. "Always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as you know, that your labour is not in vain in the vain." [1Corinthians 15:58].

It should also be mentioned that the 'Oversight' of the church holds a business and pastoral meeting each month and the trustees meet quarterly to help ensure things are done well and above board.

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 2024 the balance of unrestricted reserves was £7,877,167 (2023 - £7,712,987).

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 consider 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.

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TRUSTEES' REPORT (CONTINUED)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2024

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

(Resigned 10 February 2025)

Mr Alan Cartwright

(Appointed 19 December 2023)

Mr Derek McIlveen

(Appointed 19 December 2023)

Mr I McAlees

(Appointed 10 February 2025)

Pastor Francis Weir

(Appointed 10 February 2025)

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'.

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 Purse

Trustee

Dated: 3 March 2025