



**Dromore First Presbyterian Church  
( Non-Subscribing )**

Rampart Street  
DROMORE  
Co. Down  
( Charity Number NIC101289 )

**2022 Trustees Annual Report**

The church is governed by Trust Deed and acts in accordance with the Constitution and Code of Discipline of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland.

We, the trustees of the Dromore First Presbyterian Church ( Non-Subscribing ), are pleased to recommend that the details contained in this Trustee Report for 2022 explain 'the main activities undertaken by the charity to further its charitable purposes for the public benefit' and 'the main achievements of the charity during the year'.

David Clark

Quintan J. M. Dandell

Telley Mente

## Ministers Report

Dear Friends

2022 was the first full year that marked our return to relative normality after the Covid-19 pandemic. 2022 was also a significant year marking the earliest beginnings of our congregation as the first Presbyterians to arrive and settle in Dromore, which according to Rev. Peaston, would have been around 1620-1622. While it was only around 40 years later that the first minister was ordained and installed in Dromore in 1660, during those 40 years there would have been a steadily growing Presbyterian presence that marked the beginnings of what would more formally become the First Presbyterian Church of Dromore.

### Sunday Worship Highlights

The year began in January with the celebration of Rev. Lena Cockcroft's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary since her ordination on the 9<sup>th</sup> January. This was a particularly significant milestone for us as a congregation because Dromore was her home church and it was here amongst us that Lena would have felt the first stirrings of her call to ministry during the time of Rev. Peaston's ministry.

Holy Week was marked with a few online reflections culminating in our Easter Sunday Service on the 17<sup>th</sup> April.

On the 1<sup>st</sup> May we shared in Communion although still using the pre-packaged communion cups and wafers.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> June our formal 400<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration took place with a special service to mark the year. This kicked off a series of historical sermons reflecting on our past and various topics related to our historical identity as Non-Subscribing Presbyterians.

We had a successful harvest service on the evening of 2<sup>nd</sup> October followed by refreshments in the hall. Having the service in the evening enabled people from other churches to join us, but perhaps made it more difficult for some of our older members who don't like coming out in the evening.

The 16<sup>th</sup> October saw the choir and a number of our members joining Moira for their Harvest Service at 7.00pm. This was the first time we had been back to assist at Moira since their 2019 Harvest Service due to Covid.

On 6<sup>th</sup> November we returned to our normal Communion Service for the first time since November 2019, yet still providing members with the option of using pre-packaged communion cups (which quite a number chose to use).

On the 13<sup>th</sup> November we had the privilege of hosting the Royal British Legion at our Sunday service. It was lovely to have a full Meeting House, and wonderful to have Kaitlyn & Victoria McMurray helping to lay the wreath as well as having an augmented choir to assist in the leading of the hymns.



On the 27th November we brought our 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary year to a close with our All-Attendance Sunday. This service ended with the dedication of the plaque for the tree planted in memory of the late Queen Elizabeth II and concluded in the hall with a video summary of the Walk400 campaign and a handing over of the cheque to a representative of the Cancer Fund for Children. This was followed by tea and refreshments and an opportunity to browse photo albums with historical photos of the Church, (most notably 4 photo albums that belonged to Rev. Peaston and shared with us by Sonya Greenfield.)

We had a very successful December period with the Children's Nativity Service on the 11<sup>th</sup> December which included a puppet show put together by Wendy and Brian featuring and a visit from Santa, thanks to Santa's Dromore agent, Paul McCabe. This was followed on the 18<sup>th</sup> December with our Carols service which took place at 11:30am this year to avoid a clash with football World Cup Final. The service was followed by tea, shortbread and mince pies in the hall and a wonderful opportunity to connect again in shared fellowship and chit chat.

The year ended with our Christmas Service which took place this year on the last Sunday of the year and which drew a significant number of members, extended family and a few visitors as well.

#### Preaching Series and Topics Covered in our Sunday Worship in 2022:

- Jan/Feb – Exploring the Five Languages of Love (Physical Touch; Giving Gifts; Acts of Service; Affirming Words; Quality Time)
- June – Return of the Prodigal Son – 7 weeks
- Jun/July/Oct – Historical Series:
  - The History of Dromore NSP
  - What is the Westminster Confession and why don't we subscribe to it?
  - Why were we called Unitarians?
  - What does it mean for us to be Presbyterian?
  - How did the NSPCI come into existence?
  - The History and Significance of the Burning Bush for Presbyterians

#### Other Topics:

- Is this Really how God Acts in the World? Wrestling with the and fall of Jerusalem 598BC
- Mothers Day – Granny is Like God (Reflecting on God as 'Mother').
- I do not condemn you either - Reflection on John 8:108
- Horses, Donkeys, Strength & Vulnerability – Palm Sunday Reflection
- The Resurrection Mystery – Easter Sunday
- Resurrection Stuckness - Reflection on John 20:19-31
- Do you love me? Sharing Bread - Communion Sunday 1 May
- Queen Elizabeth II – A Reflection on her Life
- In Life & In Death – Reflecting on the Faith of Queen Elizabeth II
- Harvest – Cain & Abel and the 'First Harvest' (disaster)
- Becoming a Living Temple of God – Reflecting on Haggai & Zacchaeus
- The Art of Deep Listening Matt 13:13ff & Proverbs 1:1-7
- What is True Religion? (James 1:26-27)
- New Light on Communion – a symbol of allegiance to Christ
- Missing – A Remembrance Sunday Reflection



- What kind of a King if this? (A reflection on the Sunday of Christ the King)
- Advent 1: Plant a Sapling then Meet the Messiah (on the Sunday we planted a tree in memory of Queen Elizabeth II)

Gratitude needs to be expressed to all those who have helped to make our Sunday worship meaningful over the year: Jean McIlroy for coordinating the flower rota as well as the decorations for harvest along with those who assisted her. Ivor for so faithfully opening up and closing on a Sunday and preparing the Meeting House for us all before we arrive. To Marie for co-ordinating the organists and the choir and for all who have sung in the choir this year as well as to our organists, for blessing us with beautiful music every Sunday. Also to Lorna Beggs and Anne Mills for counting FWO envelopes and other income during the week following our Sunday Worship.

A very big thank you also needs to be expressed to Paul McCabe, and my father, Tony Moodie for preaching and filling the pulpit in my absence, both of whom gave freely of their time both in preparation and on a Sunday not wishing to receive remuneration for their ministry amongst us.

## Baptisms

As a community we celebrated three baptisms in 2022:

- Thomas Vance - 10<sup>th</sup> April – son of Linzi and Jonathan Vance
- Harrison James Thomas Greer 8<sup>th</sup> October – son of Rebecca Adams and Ryan Greer
- Lenny Fitzpatrick - 20<sup>th</sup> November, son of Danielle Orr and Gareth Fitzpatrick

## Weddings

Only one wedding was held in our Church community in the year 2022. It was the wedding of Hannah Scott and Pete Thompson which took place at The Hinch Distillery, located in the grounds of the Killarney Estate, Ballynahinch Co Down, on the 19<sup>th</sup> February 2022.

## Social, Community and Fundraising Events

To mark the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our Church community, among the other activities that took place one of the most significant was the **Walk400 campaign** in which we aimed to raise £800 by encouraging the community to walk a collective amount of 400 miles. The campaign far exceeded any of our expectations in the end **raising the amazing amount of £2,293.14** in aid of the Cancer Fund for Children NI. Not only did we raise a significant amount of funds and promote the of fitness of the congregation, but it was also a good community building exercise. Out of the campaign we now have a **Church Whats App chat group** that provides a forum for sharing community news and announcements but enables members both locally, and those further away to remain connected to the church community. A thank you is due to Roderick for the inspiration behind the campaign and for keeping us all on track with his weekly updates.

With a return to normality after the pandemic, 2022 was a significant year for us as we began to host events in the Hall again for the first time since 2019. This included a **Quiz Night** held on 6<sup>th</sup> May raising **£568.00** for the **Red Cross Ukraine Appeal**, and the wonderful celebratory event of

the **Platinum Jubilee Coffee Morning** held on 28<sup>th</sup> May (**£522.60 for the building fund**). A special thanks to Tom and Donna and all those that assisted them for helping to make these events a success.

The autumn time also was the commencement of **Line Dancing** in the hall which apart from being a wonderful social opportunity drawing members from the church as well as members from the community, it raised a total of **£550.00** for Church funds thanks to the initiative of Lynn McCormick.

The **Graveyard Clean-up** on Saturday, October 15<sup>th</sup> was also a great success and gratitude should be expressed thanks to all those who attended on the day. It was wonderful to have a number of new faces coming out with spades and brooms to help.

### **Other Significant Moments in 2022**

Special mention needs to be made regarding the stepping down of Sam O'Mullan as Honorary Secretary and of Joe Martin as Honorary Treasurer both of whom have served faithfully for periods of time that represented a fair portion of each of their lives.

Another significant moment in the life of our Church in 2022 was the closing of the Bowling Club's accounts which marked the official closing of the Church's Bowling Club which had not met since the beginning of Covid in January or February 2020.

Also to be noted was the ending Slimming World's hire of the Church Hall on a Monday after an association with us spanning well over a decade, as well as the ending of the use of the hall by the Pilates group, whose changed arrangements were brought about by moving above one of the shops in the town. We were very fortunate have the Monday evening slot filled by the Bridge Club.

### **Pastoral Care & Funerals**

2022 proved to be a very busy year of pastoral care with a number of our members struggling with their health.

A special thanks needs to be extended to Maureen Smyth for sending out cards most especially at Easter, Harvest and Christmas to a number of our elderly members and those stuck at home for various reasons, as well as for helping to organise treat boxes at Easter which were likewise distributed to a number of our older members and those who have found themselves house-bound.

The year 2022 proved to be one of our most difficult years with a number of funerals:

- Robert Russell (d. 01 03 2022)
- John McConaghy (d. 09 03 2022 funeral on 12<sup>th</sup> March, conducted at the family home by Rev. Robert McKee)
- Helen Kinghan (d. 22 06 2022)
- Josephine Russell (d. 08 08 2022)



- Errol Steele (d. 15 08 2022)
- Myrtle Greer (d. 09 09 2022)
- Dora McIlwrath (d. 31 10 2022)
- Roy Clarke (d. 06 11 2022)
- Sadie Flanagan (d. 28 12 2022)

(I also conducted a funeral at the funeral parlour of John Gamble for Gertrude (Gertie) Goodwin who passed away on Sunday 25th September 2022, resident in Dromblane nursing home, Dromore.)

I would also wish to acknowledge the tragic passing of Lee Gilliland, beloved son of William and Eileen Gilliland.

On behalf of the entire congregation, I would wish to offer our deepest condolences to all for whom 2022 was a year of grief and loss.

A word of gratitude should be expressed to Ivor for all the work he does in preparing the Meeting House for these funerals as well as to Sam and Amy Flanagan for the work they do liaising with the funeral directors about the graveyard plots, to Jean McIlroy for the flower arrangements she does for the communion table and for the hall, as well as to Sonya Russell and Norma Shields and those who assist them in organising the catering, setting up the hall, helping to serve and washing up after wards.

Lastly a very big thank you to everyone who has served in the Committee, both elders and non-elders, attending meetings so faithfully in helping to manage the life of our church with care and wisdom. A very special thank you to Sonya Greenfield for so diligently looking after the finances of our church.

As I conclude, we give thanks for the grace of God that has journeyed with us through all the ups and downs of 2022, but also with a word of concern. Over the passed 5 years of my ministry, we have sadly lost around 20 of our members, most of whom were active in the life of our community and who regularly contributed financially to the well being of the church. On the whole, we are only seeing a limited engagement with our church community from those of a younger generation and we are not finding many new members outside of our community. In reflecting on a year in which we celebrated 400 years, it needs to be acknowledged that, like many churches both within and outside of our own denomination it is not inconceivable that in the not too distant future this community may indeed be barely sustainable to keep it's doors open unless this situation is turned around. How many years do we have left as a Church community if the current trend continues, 10-15 years? If we wish to see the Dromore Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church sustaining itself into the future, it will require all of our members and associates to consider deeply how we do that.

Sincerely

Rev. Brian Moodie

## **Finance Report**

In 2022 Church services resumed as normal following the Covid pandemic.

Comparing the consolidated bank account figure for 2021 against 2022 there is an increase from £405K to £409K.

### **General Church Account**

#### **Income:**

FWO envelopes increased by around 8% from 2021.

Harvest receipts fell by £195.00 (approx. 10%)

No Gift Aid was received from HMRC in 2022, where almost £25K was claimed in 2021 (this was for a 4-year period)

The Church received some very kind donations from the family of the late Lorna Truesdale, from Thomas Sands and Hannah Scott.

We as a Church continue to be very generous in supporting our charitable collections throughout the year these were the Ukraine Appeal, The Poppy Appeal, The Royal Hospital for Sick Children, PIPS Suicide Prevention, the Simon Community and Action Cancer (SuperValu sent the £205.08 raised direct to Action Cancer). The Walk 400 was a tremendous success which raised £2,293.14 for Cancer Fund for Children.

The Denominational Charity contributions are Benevolent Fund (for those in the denomination who find themselves in need) £150, Christian Minister's Fund (for training ministers) £150, Bodel-McKenzie and Porter Funds (£10 and £50 respectively), the Orphan Society £200 and the Minister's Widow Fund £150.

New activities in the Ervine Memorial Hall were welcomed in 2022 which include Line Dancing and the Bridge Club. Unfortunately, Slimming World and Pilates no longer use the Ervine Memorial Hall, both activities ceased half-way through 2022. Our long-established Bowling club, founded in 1967, unfortunately also ceased. A donation of £200 was received from them.

#### **Expenditure:**

Reverend Brian waived any salary increase in 2021. As a committee we felt with all his hard work and dedication that he gives to our Church and congregation, it was agreed by the committee that he should receive a 5% increase from April 2022.

The organist Supplies rose significantly from £650.00 in 2021 to £2,450.00 in 2022. This was due to normal Church services resuming every week. I would just like to thank Marie Holmes for co-ordinating the musicians who are indeed very talented. The pulpit supplies during the Reverend Brian's holidays increased only by £190 in 2022. Our visiting preachers and others from our congregation are of a very high standard, some who give of their services freely.



Grass cutting costs increased from £1,000 in 2021 to £1,685.00 in 2022.

Sunday School costs in 2022 totalled £450.40. This was for prizes, gifts and bibles for the children on Children's Day and at Christmas.

**Other costs were:**

Vint's Accountants from £324.00 in 2021 to £402.30 in 2022.

Oil costs remained much the same and insurance for the Church and Ervine Memorial Hall rose by just over £100.00.

Power NI costs were £646.00 in 2022 slightly down compared to previously £776.00 in 2021.

Walker Fire costs for the maintenance of fire extinguishers, alarms and light testing etc for the Church and Ervine Memorial Hall were £604.80 in 2022 compared to £1,157.10 in 2021.

**The Church opened new accounts in December 2022** for anyone wishing to make bank transfers into the FWO and Building Fund accounts. FWO contributions began to be received into this account in December 2022. Please enter your full name and FWO number (if you have one) into the reference when making the bank transfer.

Details of the Bank Accounts can be given on request.

**Investments:**

The investment in the Progressive Two-Year Fixed Rate Bond has an interest rate of 0.5% and matures on 4th May 2023. Interest received in this account was £185.40. Market Interest rates are beginning to rise, therefore, the committee are looking at investing some of the Church money in new bank accounts.

I would like to sincerely thank Lorna Beggs and Ann Mills for recording and banking all Church donations. Also, to Joe Martin for his guidance in my transition to the treasurer's post.

These are difficult times with the cost-of-living crisis. The Church also suffers with rising costs and needs continuous financial support in the months and years ahead.

**Sonya Greenfield**

## Property Report

2022 was a reasonably quiet year in relation to property related works within the church even though use of the church and in particular the use of the church hall facility have generally returned to business as usual after the Covid-19 restrictions easing.

The following property items were attended to during 2022 as follows:

1. Completion of general church internal lighting repairs - bulb replacement etc.
2. Quotes received and order placed for works to replace existing Church Hall high-level lighting with new energy efficient LED lighting with works planned for completion by end Feb 2023.
3. Church and Church Hall heating boiler servicing/maintenance by D Wilson Boiler Servicing Dromore.
4. Church graveyard grass cutting contract ongoing.
5. Church graveyard weed spraying and church hall car park, with thanks to Tom Fairley for ongoing completion of this task on a regular basis.
6. Annual church graveyard clean up with thanks to Amy and Sam Flannagan for organising this event, with excellent turn out of willing helpers on the day.
7. Annual renewal of church hall entertainments licence ongoing by Tom Fairley including associated renewal of maintenance contracts for Fire Fighting equipment, Fire Alarms, Emergency Lighting, electrical fixed wiring testing and hall risk assessment contracts to ensure ongoing compliance with the halls entertainment licence requirements. To ensure ongoing compliance additional works are required to existing hall emergency lighting system with quotes received and order placed for works and now due completion by end of Feb 2023. Tom Fairley currently reviewing existing Fire systems/equipment maintenance contracts due to ongoing issues with current maintainer and delay in compliance under entertainment licence agreement T&C's.
8. Repairs to church external security sensor lighting.
9. Thanks to Ivor Park for his ongoing role as church warden opening/closing the church and church hall weekly including setting up of the hall for many events including Slimming World ( now relocated to Methodist ), Bridge Club, Line Dancing, Sunday School, Church Quiz, funeral teas etc. Ivor performs many unnoticed tasks around the church on a weekly basis and is a critical part of our church community.
10. Some anti-social activity was experienced during 2022 around the exterior of the church hall within the church grounds outside of church hours however this was highlighted to the local PSNI and they completed extra random patrols of the area which appears to have resolved the issue.
11. We have an ongoing issue with damp on the wall at the left hand side of pulpit which Victor Shields is in the process of resolving with the assistance of a building contractor.
12. Our thanks go to Victor Shields who kindly facilitated the removal of the old storage container at the rear of the church hall as this area was being explored by some locals for anti-social activities.
13. Sam and Amy Flanagan continued to manage the church graves records including grave related queries so our thanks to them both.



14. Ongoing management of church hall maintenance records to ensure compliance with the conditions of our hall entertainments licence.
15. Purchased additional folding tables for church hall.
16. Memorial tree purchased and planted to celebrate Queen Elizabeth 2 Platinum Jubilee and her Sovereign reign.
17. Ivor continues to monitor the Church and Church Hall oil tank reserves and orders replenishment as required throughout the year.
18. Purchase and installation of Christmas wreaths over main church entrance doors.
19. Repairs to church hall hot water beverage boiler.

My thanks to all those who helped maintain the church property in 2022 and who continue to provide many hours of unpaid labour to ensure that our church property is maintained and available for use by all the congregation including visitors.

**David Wilson - Church Property Committee Lead.**

## **Sunday School Report**

Sunday School and Bible Class recommenced in the 3rd week of September. Our numbers remain small but those who do attend are very committed and attend on a regular basis.

This year, the Junior Sunday-School are taught by Sonya, Sharon and myself while Donna and Ivor continue to share the teaching of the Bible Class.

As a Christmas treat, Sonya and Sharon organised an outing to the Nativity Scene at Tannaghmore Gardens, followed by a very tasty tea in McDonalds.

A huge thank you to Wendy and the Rev Brian who enthralled both young and old at the Children's Day Service with a very thoughtful and entertaining retelling of the Christmas Story through the use of puppets. Our two puppeteers were extremely professional and treated the large congregation to a very memorable and enjoyable Christmas Service. Thanks again to the Poole family of Supervalu who ensured that all the children and teachers received a very welcome Selection Box.

Santa Claus even found the time to visit and presented all of the children with a selection pack.

The Denominational Games, due to be held in March, have been postponed but will hopefully be held later in the year. We have started work on our entries for the Denominational Sunday School Competitions which are due to go ahead this year at the start of June. The children are all hard at work, learning new Bible stories and preparing their entries. There will be lots of writing, drawing, colouring, cutting and sticking going on in the weeks ahead.

Once again, I would just like to thank the Sunday School and Bible Class teachers, the Rev Brian and Wendy, the Church Committee, the entire congregation and most importantly our children and their parents for their loyalty, commitment and support throughout the year. New members will be made very welcome.

**Helen Dickson – Sunday School Superintendent**



## **Women's League Report**

The Women's League has not yet resumed regular meetings. However on 20th July 2022 some members and friends joined the NSPCI women to celebrate our Denominations 400th Anniversary. Sincere thanks to Mrs Carol McAvoy and the Denominational Committee for organising a very special "Walk-and-Talk" afternoon at Montalto Gardens followed by a wonderful Celebration Dinner at Rockmount Golf Club.

Since Covid it has been decided that the food for larger Church events and Funeral Teas will be ordered from a caterer. The League will continue to set up the Hall, serve and tidy as required.

For fund raising and smaller events, such as the Carol Service the League is happy to cater and is well supported by the congregation.

My thanks to everyone especially my secretary Norma Shields.

Sadly in recent months we have lost many of our congregation. We were deeply moved by the most generous legacy of £5000 left to the League by a long-time faithful member, Mrs Helen Kinghan.

During the past year, cleaning the church and hall has been carried out as required. I shall now be contacting church members so that the cleaning rota can be reorganised.

This concludes the Annual Report for 2022-2023.

**Sonya Russell**

**Chairperson 1st March 2023**