

# **ROSEMARY CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND**

**Trustees Annual Report  
for the year ended 31 December 2023**

**Registered Charity in Northern Ireland NIC 104448**

## **ROSEMARY CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT**

The Trustees present their Annual Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2023 **including** a Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at that date.

### **REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS**

**Rosemary** Congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland  
**19 North Circular Road,**  
**Belfast**  
**BT15 5HB**

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland NIC104448

### **CHARITY TRUSTEES**

The Charity Trustees who served during the year or who were trustees at the date of this report were

Claire Bennett Peggy Crilly James Dickson Roy Eakin Avril Hunter Barton Hunter Trevor Long James McConachie	Rev Philip McCrea Margaret McGuiggan Brenda Nicholl Sam Russell Heather Semple Margaret Sterrett Muriel Thompson Kaye White

### **PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS**

Minister	Rev Philip McCrea
Clerk of Session	Trevor Long
Treasurer	Roy Eakin

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER**

**Wendy Thompson**  
**25 Cardy Road, Greyabbey**  
**Newtownards**  
**Co Down BT22 2LT**

**BANKERS**

**Danske Bank, Donegall Square West, Belfast BT1 6JS**  
**Ulster Bank Ltd, Belfast City Office, Donegall Sq East, Belfast BT1 5UB**  
**Progressive Building Society, 323 Antrim Road, Newtownabbey, BT36 5DY**

**SOLICITORS**

**Messrs Magennis & Creighton**  
**614 Shore Road**  
**Newtownabbey**  
**Co Antrim**  
**BT37 0SN**

**STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT****The Kirk Session**

The charity trustees of the congregation are the members of its Kirk Session. Under the congregation's governing document, The Code, the book of the constitution and government of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Kirk Session seeks to watch over and promote the spiritual interest of the congregation and of persons not connected with any congregation who are within its bounds. It ensures pastoral care is in place in the congregation and seeks to further the contribution of the Church to Christian witness and service in the local community. The Kirk Session has delegated to its Congregational Committee the temporal affairs of the congregation including administering all funds and property belonging to the congregation. Members of the Kirk Session are ex-officio members of the Congregational Committee.

The Kirk Session consists of the ordained minister and the ruling elders of the congregation. All members are entitled to propose, speak and exercise equal votes at meetings, except that the Moderator, the minister in active duty in the congregation, has no deliberative but only a casting vote.

Stated meetings of the Kirk session are normally held **at least six times in each year.**

To be chosen for the office of the eldership in the congregation a person must be a voting member and a regular attendant on its ordinances. The selection of those proposed to be called to the office can be either by the congregation or by the Kirk Session. Members are elected if they obtain two-thirds of those who vote.

### **Presbytery**

Under the Presbyterian Church in Ireland form of governance the corporate oversight of a congregation is the responsibility of a Presbytery which superintends generally the spiritual and temporal affairs of the congregations assigned to it by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Rosemary congregation of the Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the North Belfast Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The membership of the Presbytery consists mainly of the active ministers of congregations assigned to it by the General Assembly, ministers who have retired from active duty and an elder appointed by the Kirk Session of each congregation.

### **The General Assembly**

The General Assembly is the supreme court of the Church, representing in one body the whole Church and acting as its supreme legislative, administration and judicial authority, in dealing with all matters brought before it. The General Assembly is normally constituted during the first week in June for worship and to conduct its business. At the end of business it is dissolved. The membership of the General Assembly consists mainly of the active ministers of each congregation, retired ministers and a representative elder appointed by the Kirk Session of each congregation.

### **DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE**

The charitable purpose of the congregation is the advancement of religion.

**Rosemary** Presbyterian Church is a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland, as a Reformed Church within the wider body of Christ is grounded in the Scriptures, and exists to love and honour God through faith in His Son and by the power of His Spirit, and to enable her members to play their part in fulfilling God's mission to our world.

The congregation's mission purpose is that 'We believe we are called to worship God, to share the good news of Jesus Christ with all, to enable believers to mature in their faith and deepen their fellowship and equip them for the ministry of reaching out to others in need'. *Our vision is, by the grace of God, to be an inclusive, welcoming community of Christ's people of all ages, which:*

- *is increasingly characterised by love for God, and love and concern for others;*
- *is committed to the historic Christian gospel as revealed in the Bible;*
- *is relevant to people of this time and place.*

*The congregation aims to live out its Mission and Vision as a family of God's people by being:*

- *A Covenant Community: where our relationships are rooted in the promises of God by living faithfully toward Him and toward one another*
- *An Intergenerational Community: where adults intentionally take the lead to engage with, encourage and nurture younger members to maturity in Christ.*
- *An Outward looking Community: where we want the blessings of God that belong to us in the gospel to become blessings for others beyond the bounds of our community.*
- *As a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, we believe that the Bible is the supreme authority over all we do, and that the Westminster Confession of Faith, along with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms set out what we understand the Bible teaches on key matters of Christian faith and practice.*

## **ACTIVITIES AND OBJECTIVES**

The congregation meets for worship every Sunday and visitors are welcome to join. The Sacrament of the Lords Supper is observed on several occasions during the year and all those who have been baptised and who have made a profession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are admitted to the Lord's Supper. The congregation holds regular bible study meetings and has a wide range of organisations including

- Youth Fellowship
- Boy's Brigade – Anchor Boys, Junior Section & Company Section
- Crochet Group
- Painting Group
- Drama Group
- CAP Job Club
- Heart to Heart
- Seniors' Fellowship ( Coffee and Chat )

Audio and video recordings of services of worship which were introduced in 2020 have continued and these have enabled those who are unable or unwilling to attend in person to engage in worship.

## **ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE**

### **Worship and prayer**

The congregation normally meets for worship each Sunday at 11.00am. During the week the Bible Study and Prayer Times provides an opportunity for members to meet together for fellowship, to study the scriptures and for a time of prayer.

As well as our regular services during the year we gave thanks for faithful services and sought to comfort those who had been bereaved.

At 31 December 2023 there were 137 communicant members and 167 families connected with the congregation. The average weekly attendance at morning worship was 50.

### **Pastoral care**

Members of the congregation who are unable to attend church due to sickness or age are visited on a regular basis by the minister or by an elder.

### **Mission and outreach**

At a local level the congregation supports the operation of the North Belfast Foodbank which operates from our Church Halls under the guidance of the Trussell Trust.

A fundamental element of our purpose as a Church is to reach out to the community around us and share our faith as well as meet the needs of our neighbours. This work includes an increasing number of people of all ages who do not attend church of any denomination.

Our work has two main elements:

1. Organisations which meet weekly in our suite of halls and
2. Activities and events held in a 'satellite' venue located at 309 Cavehill Road.

#### **Rosemary Organisations**

The various organisations listed earlier would normally meet in our halls at various times throughout the week providing activities and services for all ages. Other community concerts, events and fund raisers take place in our halls during the year and we welcome these as opportunities to establish relationships with the people who attend.

309 Cavehill Road

The opportunity to hold events in 309 Cavehill Road is warmly accepted by our congregation and weekly activities including a Job Club, Seniors' Fellowship ( Coffee and Chat ). Prayer times and Bible studies are held there. Other outreach events including video evenings, suppers and discussion groups are organised on an ad-hoc basis.

All of our activities and organisations are open to everyone and we are proud of the diverse nature of our membership and attendees.

During 2023 a total of £21,537 was donated to Missions and other charitable agencies.

The congregation supports the United Appeal for Mission which is a central fund of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. This fund enables congregations to support the wider mission of the denomination and to do mission and outreach on a denominational basis beyond what the congregation could do on its own. The United Appeal Fund provides financial support for mission personnel at home and overseas, assists congregations with the deployment of locally based staff, enables church planting, provides grant support for the upkeep of church premises, assists with the running costs of Union Theological College, the Church's training college for ministry students, and financially supports congregations in the areas of worship, discipleship, global mission, outreach, leadership and pastoral care.

The congregation also contributes to the denomination's annual World Development Appeal, Sunday School project and any other special appeals that are launched by the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland in response to a major catastrophe.

### **Presbytery**

The congregation was represented at the regular meetings of Presbytery by our minister and / or one of the elders. This provides an important link between the congregations and the wider structures of the church.

### **General Assembly**

The minister and one of our elders were nominated to attend the meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland held in Assembly Buildings, Belfast.

### **Property**

We have an extensive suite of buildings located over three sites as follows: Church premises situated at 26-36 North Circular Road, Belfast BT15 5HD, the Ekenhead Memorial Halls situated at 19 North Circular Road, Belfast BT15 5HB, the residential bungalow situated at 19A North Circular Road, Belfast BT15 5HB and the church Manse situated at 17 Innisfayle Park, Belfast

BT15 5HS. During the year a total of £21,529 was spent on property maintenance. Included within this figure is a sum of £5,814 for the installation of a CCTV system around the Ekenhead Memorial Halls. A total of £11,550 was spent on survey reports to identify areas needing attention during 2024 and beyond.

## **Organisations**

Rosemary congregation has a wide range of organisations catering for all ages. They meet throughout the week at various times and our halls are fully utilised. Membership numbers are in brackets.

The adult organisations include Drama group (51), Crochet group (21), and Painting group (16). Fellowship groups, Bible study and prayer times are held at various times during each week.

The youth organisations of the Congregation include the 77th Company of the Boys' Brigade [Anchor Boys (12), Junior Section (10) and Company Section (8)], Youth Fellowship (5).

A satellite venue located at 309 Cavehill Road offers various services, support and outreach to the entire community.

The purpose of all of these organisations is to serve our community and fulfil our Christian calling as a church which reaches out to the community around it while at the same time providing fellowship and teaching for our existing members.

The Congregation also partners with the Trussell Trust to provide a Foodbank on its premises which offers food support to anyone in need who is referred to them by a wide range of recognised agencies.

Cavehill Job Club is run jointly with Eglinton Presbyterian Church under the banner of Christians Against Poverty which is a UK wide charity providing help advice and training to those in financial difficulty. The Job Club did not operate fully during 2023.

All organisations are open to everyone and religious background is irrelevant.

The programs are wide and varied and relevant to the specific ages involved. The emphasis is always on the needs of the members and providing fellowship, fun and teaching.

Proper arrangements for child protection and leadership training are provided and the standards and procedures of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland are implemented in full.

## **Volunteers**



The Trustees wish to acknowledge their deep appreciation of those who give freely of their time by serving on committees and helping with organisations and other church activities.

## **PUBLIC BENEFIT STATEMENT**

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland meets the public benefit requirement by providing benefit to its members and the general public by making known the Christian Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ through the advancement of religion.

The direct benefits which flow from the purposes of the Church include the gaining of an understanding in Christian beliefs as set out in the Bible and in the Church's subordinate standards (the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Shorter and Larger Catechisms) leading to spiritual and moral development and opportunities for response to Bible teaching. In turn, this framework leads to practical expressions of Christian beliefs and standards in the local community such as through the care of those in need (including the sick, disabled and bereaved).

Generally the above benefits are delivered locally by congregations and their members or are facilitated through presbyteries or are organised and delivered centrally. Local delivery is facilitated by central resources in almost all cases. Public access is made known through the use of noticeboards, printed material, press advertisement, websites, and social media or in other ways.

The benefits are demonstrated through regular evaluation of the services and informal and ad-hoc feedback from members, their families, and members of the public.

The purpose does not lead to harm. The only private benefit flowing from our purpose is related to Ministers, Missionaries, Deaconesses, Irish Mission workers and Lay Agents who receive benefits as a result of their holding office or employment. However, this is incidental and necessary in order to further our charitable purpose. There are no other private benefits. The beneficiaries of this purpose are members, their families, other individuals that the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is in direct and indirect contact with, the community in which pastoral services are provided and other communities throughout Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, and worldwide which benefit from our engagement with and support for both Christian and other secular organisations, charities and individual members of the public.

The Kirk Session has had regard to the Charity Commissions Public benefit requirement statutory guidance.

## FINANCIAL REVIEW

The congregation's main source of income is members' contributions through the Weekly Freewill Offering. There were 107 contributors during the year ( 109 in previous year, 2022 ) donating a total of £76,391 ( £78,042 in previous year, 2022 )

Total Income of the congregation during the year was £249,664, compared to £247,992 in the previous year. The main reasons for the change were a decrease of £7,451 in Recorded Givings, a decrease of £4,519 in Legacies and Bequests, an increase of £7,560 in Investment Income, a decrease of £1,640 in Other Income and an increase of £8,453 in Organisations Income following the ending of Covid.

Total expenditure increased from £156,949 to £186,852. The main reasons for the change were an increase of £25,641 in Congregational running expenses, a decrease of £1,640 in Other expenditure and an increase of £7,462 in Organisations expenditure following the ending of Covid.

At the end of 2023 net funds carried forward were £483,254 - £286,701 unrestricted and £196,553 restricted compared to £420,442 - £217,948 unrestricted £202,494 restricted at the end of 2022.

## STATEMENT OF TRUSTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the annual report and the financial statements of the congregation in accordance with applicable law and generally accepted accounting practice.

As the congregation's total income does not exceed £250,000, the Trustees have elected under Section 64(3) of the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 to prepare a receipts and payment account and a statement of assets and liabilities.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the congregation's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time its financial position. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the congregation and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by the Kirk Session on the 6th October 2024 and signed on its behalf by

*James McConachie*

6 /10/2024

*Muriel Thompson*

6/10/2024