

# **FIRST DONAGHADEE CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND**

**Trustees Annual Report and Financial Statements  
for the year ended 31 December 2022**

**Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC 105142)**

**FIRST DONAGHADEE 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 2022 including a Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at that date.

**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS**

First Donaghadee Presbyterian Church  
20 High Street  
Donaghadee  
BT21 0AH

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC 105142)

**CHARITY TRUSTEES**

The charity Trustees who served during the year or who were trustees at the date of this report were unchanged from those of the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021.

**PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS**

Rev John Flaherty  
Clerk of Session Mr Alexander Dalzell  
Treasurer Mr Ivan Currie

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER**

Timothy C Browne  
Chartered Accountant  
36 Bresagh Road , Boardmills  
BT27 6TU

**BANKERS**

Ulster Bank Limited  
Springhill Office Bangor  
County Down

**The Congregation's Mission Statement is: 'Serving God, Serving Others'**

We endeavour, by the Grace of God, to help people of all ages become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. Our vision is, by the Grace of God, to be an inclusive, welcoming Community of Christ's people of all ages.

It is pleasing to report that Congregational life has, to a substantial degree, returned to a pre-pandemic level. For the first three months of 2022 mitigations around Covid prevention were in force but from April these restrictions were relaxed and we were allowed to decide what level of protection, if any, would be retained. In our case it was decided that a small number of pews would be closed allowing worshippers uncomfortable with a lack of social distancing to attend.

## **FIRST DONAGHADEE CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND**

It is gratifying to report that the linkage between First Donaghadee and Millise and Ballycopeland congregations is proving to be successful due in no small part to the diligence of our minister Rev John Flaherty. There is also close co-operation between our respective Kirk Sessions facilitating the scheduling of stated Committee and Session meetings of both churches avoiding Rev Flaherty having back-to-back meetings. Services around Easter, Harvest and Christmas have been arranged to allow united worship to alternate between the two church buildings.

Another sign of the more normal Church life has allowed us to return to our traditional form of Communion Service with the table laid and the elements distributed by the Elders to the congregation, the Minister also serving and being served by Elders. The Sacrament was observed on three occasions when a reasonable number of communicate members were in attendance.

At Easter in the absence of united services in the four main churches in the town First Donaghadee was invited to attend a Communion service on Good Friday in Millise with the expectation that in 2023 the service would be held in First and that it would alternate in subsequent years. We joined with Shore Street for our traditional Easter dawn service, which was held in the carpark of Shore Street, but it is planned to return to Lemon's wharf in 2023.

The Music team under the direction of Mrs Elma Thompson continues to lead our praise. Over the past year several unfamiliar hymns and worship songs have been introduced to the congregation. The organ and piano are used extensively and as appropriate to accompany the singing and on occasion both are played together with Rev John, who is an accomplished pianist joining Elma in leading worship. The Music team continue to expand their repertoire of special music for Easter, Harvest and Christmas celebrations and are much appreciated by the Congregation.

### **Youth and Children's Ministry**

Session continues to be concerned about our Sunday school as numbers attending are small and attendance is inconsistent. Nevertheless, a teaching programme is provided by our dedicated team of Mrs Sharron Watts, Mrs Carole Brown and Mrs Sandra Martin. To encourage attendance a special youth service to which each child connected to our Congregation received a personal invitation and gift was held in June with the hope that in September more would return on a regular basis. Rev Flaherty has initiated a monthly all-age service which is shorter and child friendly to encourage families to come and worship together on a regular basis.

Last year I reported that due to a lack of Leaders it was not possible to restart our Girls' Brigade and as no new or additional leaders could be found the company which was suspended has had to be permanently closed. This has been a difficult and painful decision to make and Session mindful of the huge commitment made by many over the years and the impact made on young lives would wish to acknowledge our debt of gratitude to present and former officers.

Our Scout group consisting of Squirrels, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers continues to thrive and is so successful that some sections are oversubscribed. We are indebted to the dedicated band of leaders and helpers who inspire the young people in our care and we are constantly looking for opportunities to bring them into our church family.



## **FIRST DONAGHADEE CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND**

### **Adult Organisations.**

The PW and PW Fellowship met monthly for an afternoon meeting during the past year but due to falling numbers and for practical reasons consideration was given to a possible merger into a united PW aiming to serve all the ladies in our congregation and promoting Christian Fellowship. The merger of the two organisations was completed at the end of December 2022.

The menfolk were not left out and were invited to the men's group "Manna" in Millisle and several have joined and enjoyed a warm welcome and fellowship with the menfolk of our sister church.

The Prayer group met every Wednesday morning during 2022 and our small, dedicated band derived great comfort from these meetings. Prayer has been answered in wonderful ways. We would welcome others who might wish to join but are put off by the need to pray out loud. God hears silent prayer and even a few words spoken sincerely are worth volumes.

Our regular midweek bible study met on the first and third Thursday evenings and the second and fourth Thursday mornings Sept/ May. The study concentrated on our daily bible readings which were also topics preached on by Rev Flaherty, Sunday by Sunday. This allowed for discussion on points which were difficult or needing further clarification.

### **Reflections**

The Church continues to be open on Thursday mornings for quiet reflection and prayer and from September we were able to offer tea/coffee. As part of an initiative by the four main churches we extended our opening hours to provide a warm space for those struggling to heat their homes and pay mounting heating bills. We also set up a collection point for Storehouse North Down and the congregation have responded with great generosity in providing much needed food and household essentials which many of us take for granted. This is part of our outreach and the building of bridges to our Community.

### **Additional pastoral personnel**

Conscious of the heavy workload placed on Rev Flaherty with his responsibility for two congregations and his role as Clerk of the Ards Presbytery a working group made up of representatives from both churches met and discussed how we might obtain help to assist the minister. Various ideas were considered, and a decision was made to apply for an Assistant Minister and in early December application was made. We are prayerfully awaiting the outcome and we trust that we will be successful as help is needed if we are to grow both Congregations.

Each year Session gives thanks to all who accept a leadership role and thanks to those who produce and distribute the worship CDs which are a lifeline to those who are unable to come to church. We are also grateful for the production of our regular newsletters which are another way of keeping in touch with those who are housebound and helping them to feel part of our fellowship.

In conclusion we would give thanks to almighty God for the opportunity we have to witness to our community and for the sound biblical teaching given by Rev John Flaherty. We wish him, his wife Karen and his sons Stephen and Joshua God's richest blessing in the years ahead.

## **FIRST DONAGHADEE CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND**

### **TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)**

#### **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 113 contributors during the year (2021: 113) donating a total of £87,156 (2021: £81,006).

Total income of the congregation during the year was £102,970, compared to £107,887 in the previous year.



## FIRST DONAGHADEE CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

Total expenditure increased from £71,300 to £95,222.

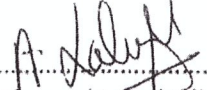
### STATEMENT OF TRUSTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

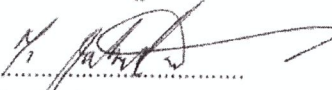
The Trustees are responsible for preparing the annual report and the financial statements of the congregation in accordance with applicable law and generally accepted accounting practice.

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) 208 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 at a meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2023 and signed on its behalf by:

  
.....  
Alexander Datzell  
Trustee

  
.....  
Tom Johnston  
Trustee