

FIRST DONAGHADEE CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

**Trustees Annual Report and Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 December 2024**

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC 105142)

FIRST DONAGHADEE CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

Annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31st December 2024

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TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2024

CHARITY TRUSTEES

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

Martin Boyd
Ivan Currie
Alexander Dalzell
Stephen Donaldson
James Gibson
Rev. John Flaherty

Anne Johnston
Tom Johnston
Desmond Lemon
William McCausland
Albert Small
Sharron Watts
Ann Wright

PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS

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

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Timothy C Browne F.C.A.
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.

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As a Kirk Session we continue to be grateful to almighty God for the opportunity to continue to worship as a congregation together Sunday by Sunday. Our numbers are small but those who attend weekly are very faithful. It is however a cause for concern that we have very few young families attending worship despite the tremendously talented and enthusiastic team of leaders within our Sunday School. We continue to pray that more families will be inspired to join us for worship, and experience the warm welcome provided.

During the year we were excited to be able to celebrate 200 years of worship in this place, although the congregation has been in existence much longer. On Sunday 29th September we were delighted to welcome the moderator of the General Assembly Right Rev Dr Richard Murray and his wife to our evening harvest service. In a full Church made up of invited guests, former ministers and towns people praise was led by the Donaghadee Community Choir, and our own music team. The Rev Murray gave a very challenging address, and everyone was entertained to supper in the Hall. Anniversary celebrations were completed by a very successful Congregational Dinner held in the Hall in January of 2025.

Following on from the nomination process to find new elders Session were disappointed that none of those nominated felt called to take on the eldership. We continue to pray that some of those approached will reconsider and agree to serve the congregation as elders in the near future. Unfortunately, due to lack of Session members able to take on some of the duties of eldership we have had to reduce the number of church districts from 13 to 10, hopefully following the upcoming election of committee we can support elders in the districts with active committee members. It is also hoped that the Sunday welcome teams will be augmented by committee members in the near future.

The congregation continues to have a close relationship with our sister congregation in Millisle, joining them for several special services throughout the year, especially at Christmas and Easter.

The Easter Dawn service was once again held at Lemons Wharf on a bright but cold Easter morning. There was a good turnout of Christian people from the town giving thanks for the raising of our lord from the grave. A warm welcome of tea and bacon baps awaited in the hall.

The session is grateful for the dedication of Mrs Elma Thompson our organist and the music team for their weekly contribution to Church worship, most weeks singing either an introit or an anthem. The music team are an invaluable part of Church worship and can be relied upon on special occasions including Christmas and Easter to lead the worship in word and in praise.

The Sunday School team provide an excellent weekly programme for a small and very diverse group of young people in a wide age range. Session would dearly love to see more young people join this enthusiastic group, led by Mrs Sharron Watts and Mrs Carole Brown and several helpers. The Nativity produced by so few this year was simply outstanding and an inspiration to us all, as was the contribution to young people's day in June.

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The Scout Group continues to thrive with over 100 young people in attendance each week covering all ages from 4 to 18. The Group is led by Mrs Christine Rankin, supported by section leaders in Squirrels, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers. It is hoped that a special Scout service will be arranged in the Church calendar and that we as a congregation can reach out to families within this group who have little or no Church connection.

PW continue to meet on the first Wednesday of the Winter months providing a social outlet for the women of the congregation, and in so doing providing support for overseas mission.

The Prayer Group meets every Wednesday morning and Session would encourage anyone who has the time to attend to consider taking part in this most important part of our Church life. Prayers for others is the basis of our faith and the ability to talk to God, whether out loud or silently is the glue that binds us together as a Christian community.

Bible study is also very much part of our faith, and the mid-week group meets on the second and fourth Thursday mornings looking in depth into the passages being preached on by Rev. Flaherty Sunday by Sunday.

Due to ongoing health problems Jim Gibson has stood down from the role of property convenor and sound technician. We as a congregation owe Jim a huge debt of gratitude for his many years of service, ensuring that the Church property was always kept in a good state of repair, as well as each Sunday managing the sound system and recording the services. It was a great pleasure to be able to recognise Jim's service with a small gift at the anniversary dinner. The thanks of the congregation are due to Billy Mc Causland and Desmond Lemon who have taken over as property convenors and Ivan Curie and Anne Wright who have taken over the managing of the sound system.

At the October meeting of Session, the Clerk Sandy Dalzell indicated that after 13 years in the post he wished to step down for personal and family reasons. It is impossible to put into words the level of contribution that Sandy has made to 1st Donaghadee in his 13 years as clerk. Sandy has led the congregation in a prayerful and sincere manner through several vacancies and has shouldered much of the responsibility for keeping the Congregation going during this time. Sandy is kind, sincere and approachable and will be a very hard act to follow, he has shown leadership in every aspect of Church life including playing a key role in presbytery committees. Sandy has been supported throughout this journey by his wife Elizabeth, and it was very fitting to be able to recognise the service of both with gifts from the Congregation at the celebration dinner in January.

As a Congregation we are grateful to our minister Rev John Flaherty, his wife Karen, and family for his pastoral care and leadership of our Congregation. As a session we continue to be concerned for his welfare as he continues to hold pastoral responsibility for both our congregation and Millisle along with his duties as Clerk of Presbytery. This is a level of work that is very exhausting, and we have continued to try, so far unsuccessfully, to obtain the services of an assistant minister. We are indebted to Mr David

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Mc Auley who helps with pastoral visitation but remain steadfast in our belief that we need to engage the services of an assistant minister or community outreach worker.

In conclusion while we are grateful for 200 years of worship on this site, we continue to praise almighty god for his goodness to us and pray that he will guide us in a prayerful way towards a bright future.

Each year thanks is given to all who accept a leadership role and without whose help we would not be able to carry on. In conclusion we would give thanks to almighty God for the opportunity witness to our community and to Rev Flaherty for moderating our session, and for his pastoring of the congregation. All this is based on his sound biblical preaching and his faithful devotion to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Risk management

The trustees have assessed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, in particular those related to the operations and finances of the charity, and are satisfied that systems are in place to mitigate any exposure to major risks. Where appropriate, systems or procedures have been established to mitigate the risks the charity faces. Internal control risks are minimised by the implementation of procedures for authorisation of all transactions and projects. Procedures are in place to ensure compliance with health and safety of staff, volunteers, clients and visitors to all of the charity's organisations. These procedures are periodically reviewed at least annually to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of the charity.

Statement of Trustees' 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 congregations' 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.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper 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 and the Charity (Accounts and Reports) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2015. 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.

PUBLIC BENEFIT STATEMENT

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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 98 contributors during the year (2023: 105) donating a total of £73,991 (2023: £78,141). Last year the congregation received a bequest of £300,000.

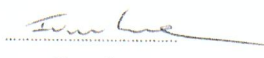
Total income of the congregation during the year was £115,941, compared to £416,829 in the previous year, including the bequest.

Total expenditure reduced from £118,768 to £116,498.

Approved by the Kirk Session at a meeting on 18th March 2025 and signed on its behalf by:



Stephen Donaldson
Trustee



Ivan Currie
Trustee