

## **TRUSTEES REPORT – 2022**

**CHURCH MISSION STATEMENT** – To bring glory to God through worship and by demonstrating the love of Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The members of the congregation are committed to one another under God and aim to encourage and welcome all families and individuals, no matter what their circumstances, into our fellowship.

2022 turned out to be a busy year for session members as we dealt with the various challenges relating to the spiritual aspects of the congregation and members are thanked for all their support both prayerful and practicable during the decisions that have been made.

We had three members of Kirk Session retire – Hubert Adams, William Brown and Ted Jenkins. Their experience and contributions to decisions made will be sorely missed and we wish them well and pray that God will richly bless their retirement. As a result of the retirements we had a vote for new elders and we were delighted to welcome six new members onto the session – Michelle Anderson, Elsie Crawford, Deborah Harding, Patricia Lightbody, Joy McQuade and Jacqueline Wallace and we look forward to their input into the spiritual running of the congregation.

Our congregation is divided into districts and each elder is allocated one. They are asked to visit each household in their district at least 3 times a year to deliver church literature etc. They are also the contact between families and church if our help is required.

A new congregational committee was also voted on during the year and we wish to thank those who agreed to serve. The committee is divided into sub committees which cover all aspects of the day to day running of the church as this makes decision making easier. However the members of the Kirk Session are ultimately responsible for all aspects of church work and the decisions that have to be taken.

We offer our sympathy and continued prayerful and practical support to those families in the congregation who suffered bereavements in 2022.

Our Pastoral Care team strive to visit those in the congregation who are housebound, feeling lonely or suffering emotionally after a bereavement or illness.

We hold our Sunday morning service each week with an evening service as announced. Our morning services are recorded and put on our church Facebook page each week so that we can reach those who are unable to attend church for whatever reason. Our morning service is well attended and numbers are increasing as folk who stopped attending during Covid are now attending again. If they come to church and are still feeling a little concerned about being among people there is one aisle in the church that has social distancing restrictions in place.

We had our annual services over the Easter period, Harvest services in September and Christmas all of which were well attended. Over the Christmas period we held a free lunch for the members of the congregation and people in the local community and surrounding area were invited to attend. The lunch was followed by a sing-in of carols and Christmas songs in the Church. Both events were well supported and a big thank you goes to all who organised the two events. It was a wonderful way to get the community together and to outreach to them.

To help raise funds we ran a New to You Sale. Members of the congregation and friends donated clothes, footwear, scarves, and jewellery. These items were sorted into condition and sizes and over a two-day period we ran the sale. It was a lot of hard work but a great success. Any left-over articles were boxed up and taken to one of the local charity outlets.

Christian Aid Week took place in May and due to the lack of folk willing to go door to door to collect we put the envelopes in the pews of the church and gave them to friends to return. The response was very encouraging for this worthwhile cause.

Our organisations – Sunday School, Bible Class, Manna (men's fellowship), Tuesday Club (senior citizens group), Girls' Brigade, Walking Group, Church Choir, Bible Reading Club, Bowling Club, MAD (Millisle and District) Crafters continued to meet and to all leaders who always give of their time to run them we say a big thank you on behalf of Kirk Session for your dedication and commitment and assure you of our prayerful and practical support. Kirk session members have a keen interest in the organisations and the reports received at meetings from those assigned to each organisation have been very encouraging as we aim to bring Gods message through them to our congregational members and those in the surrounding area.

Reverend Flaherty continues to be kept busy with his work in the congregation, the congregation of 1<sup>st</sup> Donaghadee and as Clerk to the Ards Presbytery. He has to conduct two Sunday morning services each week as well as dealing with all spiritual and some practical aspects of both churches. We as a congregation give him, Karen, Joshua and Stephen our prayerful and practical support always. His Clerk of the Ards Presbytery role is a busy one as he has to attend meetings each month and be available to deal with queries from other ministers in the Ards Presbytery.

Next year our church will be celebrating 250 years as a congregation so we have been making basic plans as to what celebrations we hope to put in place to praise and glorify God for his blessings on our congregation.

We pray Gods richest blessings on the congregation and pray that we can continue to outreach in any way possible to bring his love and his word to the local community and we praise and glorify God for watching and guiding us through another year.