

**FIRST MAGHERAFELT 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 2024 including a Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at that date.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

First Magherafelt congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
26 Meeting Street, Magherafelt, Co Londonderry, BT45 6BW

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC105608)

CHARITY TRUSTEES

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

Mrs I Brown,	Dr. E. Hunter,
Mr R Campbell,	Mrs. H. McKay,
Mrs A Crossett,	Mr R.G. McKeown
Mr W. Currie,	Mr J. Smyth,
Rev Dr J A Curry	Dr. M Stevenson,
Mr H. Duncan,	Mr H Stewart,
Mr J Hamilton,	Mr W. H. J. Todd,
Mr A.R. Hogg,	Mr E. Wylie

PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS

Minister	Rev Dr J A Curry
Clerk of Session	Mr R J Hamilton
Treasurer	Mr E Glasgow

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Hopper & Co, 25 High Street, Carrickfergus, BT38 7AN

BANKERS

Danske Bank, 18 Ballymoney Road, Ballymena BT43 5BY

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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 Sessions 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 congregations. All members are entitled to propose, speak and exercise equal votes at meetings, except that the Moderator, the ministers in active duty in the congregation, has no deliberative but only a casting vote.

Stated meetings of the Kirk session are held five times 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. First Magherafelt congregation of the Presbyterian Church has been assigned to the Tyrone 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 the congregation.

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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.

First Magherafelt congregation of the 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 congregations mission purpose is :- As those who know Jesus, taking the Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit, to others, so that they might become disciples of Jesus Christ.

Our vision is to be those who GLORIFY GOD as we Experience GRACE as His children, Share LOVE in His family and Demonstrate COMPASSION to His world.

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]

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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 six 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 and prayer meetings and has a wide range of organisations including:

- Sunday School
- Jr Church
- Girls Brigade
- Crafty Ladies
- English Language Classes
- Mission Awareness
- Creche
- Youth Fellowship
- Ladies @First
- Youth Club
- Coffee Mornings

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Worship and prayer

The congregation normally meets for worship each Sunday at 11am and 6:30pm. During the week the fortnightly Bible Studies and weekly prayer meeting provides an opportunity for members to meet together for fellowship, to study the scriptures and for prayer.

As well as our regular services during the year we acknowledged God's gift of new life at the Sacraments of Baptism, we conducted marriage services and gave thanks for faithful services and sought to comfort those who had been bereaved during the year.

At 31 December 2024 there were 226 communicant members and 294 families connected with the congregations. The average week attendance at morning worship is 135

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 elders.

Mission and outreach

We run English language classes for migrants and many from all sections of the community attend our ministry programs such as girls brigade. We run a community coffee morning each week in partnership with the local special need school. We have strong mission links with Malawi and support various mission organisations.

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

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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, assist 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 denominations other special appeals.

Presbytery

The congregation was represented at the regular meetings of Presbytery by our minister and 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, in October.

Property

The congregation operates from its church building and hall complex located on Meeting Street, Magherafelt and from its manse in King Street, Magherafelt

Organisations

Small Group Bible Studies

This key aspect of our midweek fellowship meets fortnightly and is open to everyone. It does not require you to have any particular level of bible knowledge simply a desire to learn together from God's word.

We encourage those who attend to read the passage and to answer the questions they can beforehand. On the evening they are free to share their answers or simply listen as others do so. The leaders of the groups will have met with Rev Curry and been through the studies and we also preach on the passages studied in our Sunday evening services.

Prayer Meetings– the opportunities for people to join is in prayer include

(1) Main Congregational Prayer Meeting, on Thursdays @8pm.

(2) Weekly Prayer Time for Worship, Sundays 10:30-10:45

Junior Sunday School

Junior Sunday School for Primary School aged children continues to meet every Sunday at 10am to 10.45am from September to June. We take part in various services throughout the year and really appreciate the effort the children put into practising and the support from home. We use stories, songs and craft to encourage the children to learn more about God.

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We start each session with the children coming into their classes. We chat with them about their week and get to know them more. We also open in prayer in our own classes. Then we do our stories and activities together. All the classes meet up together at the end of the session to sing together from a variety of action songs to share God's love.

Senior Sunday School and Bible Class

We continue to meet each Sunday morning at 10am to 10.45am from September to June. We have a good group of young people but would always welcome more. The young people take part in various family and youth services during the year, communicating the message of Jesus through drama, reading the Bible, prayer and song.

Creche

Crèche continues to meet every Sunday morning during the church service. Each child coming out to creche now also gets a book when the league of church loyalty attendance prizes are given out to the older children at the end of January. Many thanks to all who are involved in looking after the little ones on a Sunday morning. Your help is very much appreciated.

Children's Church

Children's Church takes place each Sunday morning with children of Primary School age leaving the main service following the children's address. Age related activities are made available to them in the Church hall which follows a different theme for each calendar month eg. Creation, Bible characters, miracles etc. The activities provided include Bible stories, arts / crafts and games.

Children's Church is a team effort and with the number of children attending on the increase we would welcome other volunteers to join the team to assist with teaching or in a more supportive / practical capacity. Please speak to either one of us for further information.

Choir / Praise Band

There are several opportunities to assist in leading the praise in our church. If you feel you would like to participate in any way please speak with our organist or come along to any of the practices noted in the announcements. We especially welcome people who are interested in joining the choir on Sunday mornings to help lead our praise.

Mad@First on Sundays (Youth Fellowship)

Mad@First on Sundays meets to worship at the evening service at 6pm and then for their meeting in the Graham Room. We would like to encourage any youth of secondary school age to come along to Mad on Saturday or Sunday nights and any of the other events planned throughout the year.

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Ladies@First

Ladies @ First meet mainly on the third Tuesday of each month and hold other special events throughout the year. In all of the meetings we are seeking to adhere to the aim of Presbyterian Women and encourage women to become disciples of Jesus.

We invite all ladies to come along to our meetings and events. If it is difficult to commit to every month please feel free to come along when you can and you will be assured of a warm welcome.

English Classes

The class meets on Monday mornings from 10 to 12 and the average attendance is between 10 and 20 with 3 to 4 volunteer tutors we would not call ourselves teachers rather we are guides to the English language. The class at present comprises Ukrainians, Portuguese and Afghani. The class starts with each person reading as best they can from a passage from the Bible. We now are amazed with the progress some have made although they still have difficulties in understanding some of the phrases which are in common usage.

221stMagherafelt Girls Brigade

The girls meet in the Church hall every Wednesday night. Explorers meet at 6.00pm, juniors 7.00pm. Seniors and Brigaders from 7.45pm.

We pray as we continue in Girls Brigade to remember our motto at all times:

‘Seek, Serve and Follow Christ.’

Youth Club @ First

The numbers in Youth Club remain at a steady 20 -25 regular Boys and Girls every week. The young people take part in various activities such as board games, table tennis, pool, play station and Wii games with the usual group games such as football and uni Hoc. We are encouraged by our numbers and our reliable group of leaders. We would ask for your continued support and prayers as we try to engage with these young people to come to know and trust the Lord.

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.

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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.

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FINANCIAL REVIEW

The congregation's main source of income is members' contributions through the Weekly Freewill Offering

Total Income of the congregation during the year was £190,473 compared to £186,094 in the previous year.

Total expenditure of the congregation during the year was £161,465 compared to £182,287 in the previous year.

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 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.

Approved by the Kirk Session at a meeting on Tuesday 24th June 2025 and signed on its behalf by

Name – Rev Dr Jonathan A Curry

Signature: 

Date: 24th June 2025

Name – Robert John Hamilton

Signature: 

Date: 24th June 2025