

SANDHOLES CONGREGATION OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND

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

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC105626)

SANDHOLES 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

SANDHOLES congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
8 Kiltyclogher Road, Sandholes, Cookstown BT80 9AU

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC105626)

CHARITY TRUSTEES

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

Rev. S. J. Mervyn Lindsay
Mr. Francis Black
Mr. Malcolm Davidson
Mr. Leonard McIvor

Mr. Norman Black
Mr. Kelvin Henry

PRINCIPAL OFFICE BEARERS

Minister
Clerk of Session
Treasurer

Rev. S. J. Mervyn Lindsay
Vacant
Mr. Kelvin Henry

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Mr Colin Barnes
28 Tullyodonnell Road
Dungannon
BT70 3JE

BANKERS

Danske Bank
45-48 High Street
Portadown
Craigavon
BT62 1LB

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SOLICITORS

**Millar, Shearer & Black
40 Molesworth Street
Cookstown
BT80 8PH**

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 congregations. 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 held at least twice 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

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TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)

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. Sandholes 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.

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.

Sandholes 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 congregation's mission purposes is, *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, 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:

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- *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 at 10.30am and at 7.00pm on the fourth Sunday of the month and visitors are welcome to join. The Sacrament of the Lords Supper is observed on two 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 jointly with Pomeroy congregation and has a wide range of organisations including

- Sunday School
- Youth Fellowship (jointly with Pomeroy congregation)
- Badminton Club
- Bowling Club
- P W – Women's group
- Good News Club
- Midweek meeting (jointly with Pomeroy congregation)
- Annual Holiday Bible Club (jointly with Pomeroy congregation)

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Worship and prayer

The congregation normally meets for worship each Sunday at 10.30am and at 7.00pm on the fourth Sunday of the month September to June. During the week the Bible Study 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 acknowledged God's gift of new life at one Baptism service. No people were admitted to communicant membership and to the Lord's

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TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)

Supper on profession of faith. We conducted five funeral services and sought to comfort those who had been bereaved during the year.

At 31 December 2023 there were 100 communicant members and 81 families connected with the congregation. The average week attendance at morning worship is 43.

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 and elders.

Mission and outreach

The following is a summary the congregation's local mission and outreach including donations to external missions and agencies.

At a local level the congregation continues to make good use of our new Church Hall which enhances our capabilities for outreach. We have had a number of fundraising and other events in the Church and Church Hall which included a Family BBQ & Fun Evening with Bouncy castle for the children. We also hosted the RUC G. C. East Tyrone Branch Annual Carol Service which was very successful and made us accessible to the wider community. We also had an Act of Remembrance in our service on Remembrance Sunday which draws some people from the community.

Our hall was used the CEF Mid-Ulster Committee for monthly meetings. Sandholes Community Group also uses our property for their annual Carol Service and switching on of the Christmas tree lights. We held our annual congregational Christmas dinner in the hall. The minister takes School Assemblies in two local primary schools and two local high schools. He and another member of the congregation are on the Board of Governors of Donaghey P.S. We are involved in a churches football league in the summer which helps to make a connection with those who are not regular attendees of our church. Representative from a number of Missionary Organisations have the opportunity to speak about their work at various Sunday services and Midweek meetings as well as at PW meetings. Some of our Young People were involved in Summer Outreach teams at home and in England.

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

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TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)

upkeep of church premises, assist with the running costs of Union Theological College, the Church's training college for ministry students, and financially supports congregation in the areas of worship, discipleship, global mission, outreach, leadership and pastoral care. The congregation also contributes to the denominations annual Sunday School project and any other special appeals e.g. The Moderator's Appeal for Indonesia.

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 June.

Property

We have a new Church Hall, and our church building is in good repair. No major repairs or refurbishment projects were needed during the year.

Organisations

A brief summary of the organisations and what they did during the year.

Our Sunday School meets on Sunday mornings when around 20 children and young people are taught from the Bible. Our Youth Fellowship also meets on Sunday evenings, alternating with Pomeroy congregation, when a group of young people find help and develop friendships as they are encouraged to follow Christ and to growth in the Christian faith. They also enjoyed these benefits at their annual residential weekend away.

Our bowling club meets each Monday night from September to March. The club has members from the wider community and takes part in the South Tyrone Churches League. It joins another church bowling club for a meal and presentation of prizes in a local hotel.

On Tuesday nights the Badminton Club meets and caters for a wide range of children and adults many from the local community with around 50 in attendance.

Our ladies' group, P. W., also meets monthly on Wednesday evenings during the winter season. Various guest speakers encourage the development of Christian growth and support for Mission.

On Thursday nights, alternating with Pomeroy congregation, we have a Midweek meeting for prayer and Bible study, and a number of missionary speakers come during the year.

Average attendance is around 12.

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TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT (cont'd)

At various times throughout the winter months we run a Good News Club for children on Tuesday nights. And in the summer, alternating with Pomeroy congregation, we hold a Holiday Bible Club with an attendance of over 50 in 2023, including many from without the congregation.

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

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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. There were 72 families donating a total of £30,342 (£32,612 in 2019)

Total receipts for the congregation during the year was £64,308 when compared to £115,105 (2019).

Total payments by the congregation during the year was £47,733 when compared to £107,476 (2019).

Whilst Weekly freewill offering hasn't recovered to pre-covid levels, total receipts are ahead of total payments by approx. £17k. The congregation has completed all loan repayments associated with the building of its new hall.

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 19th December 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

Signed: 

Name: Kelvin Henry

Date: 19/12/25

Signed: 

Name: Malcolm Davidson

Date: 19/12/25