

Trustees' report for the year ended 31 December 2023

The Elders of Armagh Baptist Church, as Charity Trustees, present the following report on the work of the church for the year ended 31 December 2023.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies and comply with the trust deed and the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their financial statements with Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective January 2015).

Structure, governance and management

The charity has Trustees as detailed out in the charity constitution. The church is recognised as a charity under the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland as at the date of registration being the 8 July 2020.

Where appropriate, Trustees are appointed following a selection process undertaken by the members of the church. The Trustees will hold their positions on a 5-year cycle until such times as they resign, retire or are removed.

Trustee's records are updated on the charity commission website to represent these changes.

Organisation

The Trustees who have served during the year are detailed on page 3. The Trustees are expected to play several key roles in the running of the charity.

The principal function of the Church is to support the advancement of the Christian religion by promoting through the work of the Church the mission of the Gospel, pastoral, social and evangelistic. All the functions of the Church relate to the advancement of religion through holding regular worship and communicating and caring for worshippers of all ages especially the sick, elderly and others in our local community.

Public Benefit

The charity trustees have complied with their duties in line with the Commission's Public Benefit statutory guidance. Regular worship and reaching out into the community as well as other activities both social and fundraising have been carried out throughout the year to fulfil our statement of public benefit. The premises are regularly used by various organisations within the church.

Statement of Public Benefit

The direct benefits which flow from our purpose include attendance at meetings convened for the teaching of Scripture, for fellowship, for the breaking of bread, as well as involvement in prayer meetings and evangelism. This is evidenced in personal growth in faith of those who attend the church, comfort to the bereaved and to the sick and elderly members of the church who receive encouragement through visitation and prayer. The provision of religious education for children and young people. Financial support for the departments of the Association of Baptist Churches in Ireland and for missionaries sent out from our church locally and to other parts of the world through like-minded organisations.

These benefits are demonstrated through feedback from regular attendees at the various church services, interest in missions shown by prayer and financial support given, and the ongoing regular attendance of members at worship services. The number of DVDs issued on a weekly basis to those unable to attend a service and statistical reports of the number of downloads of services via the Internet.

The Trustees are satisfied that carrying out the purpose of our charity will not cause harm to any individual attending the church, or to any other members of the wider community. The charity's beneficiaries are church members and adherents, and anyone who chooses to attend the church services which are open to the general public. Any trustee who is a pastor, is an employee of Armagh Baptist Church. Their salary and any incurred expenses are incidental and necessary to enable Armagh Baptist Church to provide the pastoral support required to fulfil our stated purpose.

Aims and Objectives

Armagh Baptist Church conducts regular services for public worship, prayer, Bible study, preaching and teaching for all age groups, and provides pastoral care to the sick and elderly of the church through visitation and prayer. Other activities of the church include Sunday School, Parent & Toddler Groups, Children's Meetings, Youth Meetings, Women's Meetings, Men's Events & Friendship Hour, together with regular outreach events to the wider community, in schools and residential care homes.

31 December 2023 Report

The Elders of Armagh Baptist Church, as Charity Trustees, present the following report on the work of the church for the year 2023.

We had the joy of baptising 7 believers in April, and we added 10 new members following our May Members' Forum, bringing our membership back to the level it was at before COVID, and before we sent out eleven of our members to form Keady Baptist Church. We reached 138 members before sending out Mark & Emma Rooney to Canada, and we lost one member through death, when Rae Gordon passed away in December. So, we ended the year with 135 members.

The funeral of Elsie Turbitt was held in Armagh Baptist Church on Friday 20th January 2023. Elsie had been attending for about six years, since her mother Edith McMahon passed away.

We had the joy of conducting three weddings in our church this year: Leah Knox to Adam Nesbitt on Wednesday 7th June, Abigail Reaney to David George on Friday 9th June, and Cherith Watson to David Beck on Thursday 20th July. Again, we nearly lost count of the number of babies that were born to young married couples in our congregation!

Ian Grant completed his 14th year as pastor of the church on 1st May 2023, before taking up the role of President of the Association of Baptist Churches in Ireland on Sunday 7th May at a handover service from Pastor Mark Patterson held in Moira Baptist Church. He has been kept busy throughout the year since. He will hand over the role to Edwin Ewart on 11th May 2024.

With Mark Rooney emigrating to Canada on 14th August 2023, it was important that a new Assistant was appointed as quickly as possible. The church met and agreed to appoint one of their own deacons, Graham Dougan, as Pastoral Assistant for one year from 1st August 2023. We also agreed to ask Andrew Moorcroft (IBC student assistant) to continue to preach monthly, and to help with the youth work on a Friday night weekly also. This arrangement has been working well throughout the year. We also record thanks to the men of the ABC Preaching Group who have preached at various times throughout the year. Mark Rooney is starting a one-year Interim Pastorate in Hawkwood Baptist Church, Calgary, Canada on 1st January 2024. We continue to pray for Mark, Emma, and their daughter Willow.

As well as ministry and visitation, Ian and Graham have continued to speak at assemblies in three primary schools, and at meetings in Fairlawns, Hockley, and Lisanally Day Care Centre, along with others. We also brought the Amazing Journey into several schools in the area.

Our missionary interest continued throughout the year, guided by the missions committee, again enabling us to give £27,567 to the work of various mission agencies at home and abroad. Our church website, Facebook page and YouTube channels continue to host videos of our church services, enabling a wider audience to get a taste of what goes on within the walls of our church building.

Our *Towards 2030* vision has guided our outreach efforts in local, focussed and world mission through the year. Perhaps the biggest effort in terms of outreach this year could be summed up in two ways: Follow the Star, when 100 volunteers turned our building into a Bethlehem village experience for two nights just a week or so before Christmas, and over 700 people came through our doors and were reminded in various ways of the true meaning of the Christmas story.

Our outreach to Crossmaglen was a new venture this year, which resulted in ten meetings being held in the Community Centre in the Square, and every home in the town being visited twice with Gospel literature. A new 'Crossmaglen Baptist Outreach' Facebook page enables us to reach people with news of how Armagh, Keady, and Newry Baptist Churches are trying to work together in the area. About a dozen people from a five-mile radius of Crossmaglen have been attending the meetings. We hope to build on this in 2024.

We record thanks to God for his faithfulness throughout another year of ministry.

Pastor Ian Grant (On behalf of ABC Trustees)

Financial Review and Reserves

The principle sources of income are mainly from gifts and donations. The annual accounts show a surplus for the year of £17,428. The trustees have reviewed the financial position of the Church and are satisfied that there are adequate funds in place to ensure that the Church can continue its activities and the financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2023 can be signed off as a going concern.

By order of the Board



Mr Alister Knipe
Trustee

29 MAY 2024
Date

Charity Commission Number: NIC107549