

**Holy Trinity Church**  
(Soldierstown)

**Parish of Aghalee**



**TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT**

For the year ended:  
31<sup>st</sup> December 2023

N.I. Charity Number:  
**NIC101581**



**Holy Trinity Church**  
(Soldierstown)

**Parish of Aghalee**

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For the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023

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**Holy Trinity Church**

(Soldierstown)

**Parish of Aghalee**

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**References and administrative details:**

Charity Name:

**Aghalee/Aghalee/Holy Trinity/Down&Dromore/Church of Ireland**

*commonly known as:*

**Holy Trinity Church, Parish of Aghalee**

Charity Registration Number:

**NIC101581**

**Contact details:**

Website: <http://www.aghalee.dromore.anglican.org>

Email: [aghaleeparish@gmail.com](mailto:aghaleeparish@gmail.com)

**Treasurer:**

Miss Elizabeth Reid,

15 Broadwater Park, Aghalee, BT67 0EW

Tel: 028 9265 1047

**Rector:**

Rev Paul McAdam

Aghalee Rectory, 39 Soldierstown Rd, Craigavon, BT67 0ES

Tel: 028 9209 0989

### **Trustees:**

Mrs. Irene Culbert	Mr. Norman McAlister
Mr Tom Bradley*	Mr. Jim McLorn (dec'd 2023)
Mr. Larry Donaghey	Mrs. Jacqueline Montgomery
Mrs. Sheila Duncan <sup>+</sup>	Mr. Stephen Montgomery
Mr. Donald Frazer	Mr. Gavin Murray
Mrs Joy Frazer*	Mr. Noel Murray
Mr. Roy Hanna	Miss Elizabeth Reid*
Mrs. Helen Laird <sup>+</sup>	Mrs Sylvia Thompson
Mrs. Jennifer Martin	Mr. David Twigg
Rev Paul McAdam	Mr. John Watson

+ Stepped down during last year

\* Took up post during last year

### **Office-Bearers:**

Rector:	Rev Paul McAdam
Churchwardens:	Mrs. Joy Frazer Mr. John Watson
Glebe-wardens:	Mr. Noel Murray Mr. Donald Frazer
Secretary:	Mr. Norman McAlister
Treasurer:	Miss Elizabeth Reid

### **Independent Examiner:**

McCleary & Company Ltd.

### **Bankers:**

**Danske Bank**

## Trustees' Report 2023

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The trustees present the annual report and statements of Receipts and Payments and Assets and Liabilities for Holy Trinity (Soldierstown), Parish of Aghalee, for the year ended 31st December 2023.

### **OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES**

The charitable purpose of the Church of Ireland is the advancement of religion.

The principal function of Holy Trinity, Aghalee is to support the advancement of the Christian religion. Being open to and engaging with society as a whole and offering pastoral care and support to those needing help are fundamental to the practical delivery of the benefits of Christianity.

As a result of activity in the pursuit of the advancement of the Christian religion, Holy Trinity, Aghalee has custody of certain property, records, materials and artefacts which are of significance to the cultural and religious heritage of the whole community. The maintenance of these is undertaken by the select vestry of Holy Trinity, Aghalee.

### **ACHIEVEMENTS, PERFORMANCE AND PUBLIC BENEFIT**

The church cherishes its motto "Creating and sustaining Christians" and has spent the last year working towards its continuing commitment to deliver on this motto.

Under the leadership and pastoral care of the Rector, and with the active participation of a good number of volunteers, the parish continues to carry forward the Christian outreach and pastoral ministry required to sustain a rural parish.

During the early part of the year, services were held in the church hall due to on-going restoration work to the church building. However, on completion of the restoration work, services in the church resumed from late March.

Occasional special services were held to mark the major Christian festivals etc. Easter Sunday (95); Harvest Thanksgiving (202); Remembrance Sunday (110); Christmas Carol Service (102) and Christmas Eve/Day (70).

Throughout the year the parish maintained an online presence – developing better use of the parish Facebook page (@AghaleeParish) and Youtube channel. Sunday services were streamed on the parish Youtube channel (average ~70 weekly viewers).

The parish maintains artefacts, materials and historic buildings for the benefit of the public and in particular for those appreciative of longstanding Christian heritage.

Access to Church buildings is restricted for public safety reasons – however, visitors can access the church by arrangement, when they will be accompanied by a member of the parish.

Access to historical church records can be provided to any member of the public requiring information for research and genealogical purposes.

### **Aghalee Parish Heritage Project:**

Throughout the year, the parish continued the work of our Heritage Development Project involving major restoration work to Holy Trinity Church and promotion of the heritage of the parish, along with its links to the Lagan Navigation and nearby hamlet of Soldierstown.

Aghalee Parish Heritage Project is supported the National Lottery Heritage Fund - with a grant of £185,400 to part-fund this project. The Trustees would like to acknowledge the funding received from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, which will make possible the completion of the delivery stage of this project.

The restoration work to the church building was largely completed by March 2023, pending a settlement period. The contractor was J.S. Dunlop Construction Ltd; and the architect/project supervisor was Leighton Johnston Associates.

A service of rededication was held on Passion Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> March 2023; at which gifts of choir books, communion linens, pulpit & lectern falls were presented.

On 1<sup>st</sup> July, a special music event was held to mark the centenary of the church organ; 13 organists played during the course of the day and around 250 visitors called in to listen. The organ originally dedicated to those members who served or lost their lives in the Great War; so information about the ‘Soldiers of Soldierstown’ was also put on display.

In September, a series of 3 leaflets was produced, detailing the heritage of Holy Trinity Church, the Lagan Navigation and the hamlet of Soldierstown.

Also, in September the parish took part in the European Heritage Open Days

On October 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>, a 3-day Heritage Festival was held – being officially opened by Dame Mary Peters. Floral displays in the church depicted various aspects of parish heritage; a costume pageant told the story of our history from pre-Christian times; and the minor hall was transformed into a heritage café. Approximately 1250 people attended during the course of the Festival.

In December, a 112-page book entitled ‘Soldiers, Sailors, Saints and Spinners’ was published, telling the story of our parish history and heritage. The book was designed by Jo-Ann Smyth (Evolution Graphics) and printed by Print-It (Moira).

Also in December, a new parish website was launched enabling us to share details of our heritage and parish activities. The web-developer was Jonathan Higgins (ConceptNI). The website can be viewed at: [www.aghalee.dromore.anglican.org](http://www.aghalee.dromore.anglican.org)

Throughout the year, a series of Heritage Talks was held on the following subjects:

- Professor Brian Walker, 'Our Holy Heritage' (the church history of Aghalee parish).
- Mr Simon Walker, 'A Caroline Church' (church architecture of the Caroline period)
- Dr Ciaran Toal, 'Lagan & Linen' (the linen industry of the Lagan Valley)

## Organisations & Activities

Our parish organisations are open to all-comers. In particular, the Mums & Tots, GFS, CLB and Bowling Club usually have many members who are not parishioners; and we are delighted to welcome everyone. Parish organizations are: -

- **'Jigsaw' Sunday School** – usually meets during service-time each Sunday; although has not yet fully resumed following the pandemic.
- **The Parish Choir** contributes to the worship of the church and offers members a chance to build friendship and enjoy singing together. Practice evenings are held frequently on Thursday evenings; and as needed for special occasions such as Easter, Harvest, Remembrance and Christmas services.
- **Soldierstown Tots Group**: usually meets on a Monday morning in the parish youth-hall. It welcomes children of pre-school age along with their mums (dads, grannies, grandads, carers – are all welcome!). Some members, who had no previous connection to the church, have found this a very welcoming and engaging group. By nature of the group, attendance fluctuates - but it welcomes from 6-12 children each week.
- **Girls' Friendly Society** – usually meet on Monday evenings between September and April. The current enrolment is ~25 drawn from both parishioners and non-members. There are 7 volunteer leaders who are enthusiastic and encouraging for the girls. The GFS girls also participate in various activities and competitions at Diocesan level.
- **Church Lads' Brigade** – also meets on Monday evenings between September and April. CLB has a membership of ~15 - both parishioners and non-members. The boys enjoy a great variety of activities and outings.
- A relaxed, small-scale Parents Evening was held in April – the first time GFS / CLB had been able to do so since the start of the pandemic.



- **Mothers' Union** - is a long-standing organisation within the parish and has ~12 regular members. M.U. meets occasionally on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the months - members enjoy regular outings, Diocesan events, and the chance to meet with other M.U. branches. M.U. actively supports of the Women's Refuge Centre by organizing a collection of toiletries etc.
- **Ladies Fellowship** usually meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday evening of each month. The program of activities is progressive and imaginative and engages regularly with around 15-20 attendees. Ladies Fellowship is open to all, including those from beyond the church family.
- **Men's Group** was established as a new venture, beginning in September 2023, to build friendship and fellowship amongst the men of the parish – meeting on the last Wednesday morning of each month, with a program of visiting speakers.
- **Soldierstown Bowling Club:** competes in the Lisburn & District Indoor Bowling League. Home matches and friendly / practice evenings are held on Wednesday evenings in the church hall. The club welcomes all bowlers.
- **Midweek Fellowship / Bible Study Group:** Usually meets on Wednesday evenings in the Parochial Hall, Aghalee. It is for those who wish to explore and share the Christian faith with others, in a friendly, welcoming, relaxed atmosphere.
- Also - **Sunday Morning "Cup of Tea"** usually allows service-goers to meet up before the services to chat in an informal setting.

## **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

### **Governing Document and Constitution of the Charity**

Aghalee Parish is governed and managed in accordance with the Constitution of the Church of Ireland and the Diocesan Regulations of the Diocese of Down & Dromore.

### **Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees**

The Trustees of Aghalee Parish are the members of the Select Vestry.

Chapter III of the Constitution of the Church of Ireland governs Parishes and Parochial Organisations. All members of the Church of Ireland who are over the age of 18 and are either resident within the parish or live elsewhere but have been accustomed members of the congregation for at least three months, may register as members of the General Vestry of the parish, allowing them to attend and vote at meetings of the General Vestry and to stand for election to the Select Vestry. Meetings of the General Vestry are held (at least) annually within three weeks of Easter.

Members of the Select Vestry are elected at the Annual General Vestry meeting and hold their positions for a period of one year. Select Vestry members may be re-elected annually and there is no limit on the number of terms which may be served.

The Trustees / Select Vestry so elected are listed at the start of this report.

### **Organisational Structure**

The Select Vestry has been responsible for the day-to-day management of the parish. The Select Vestry consisted of the Rector, the churchwardens, the glebe-wardens and twelve other members of the general vestry elected at the Annual General Vestry meeting.

The Select Vestry is chaired by the Rector. The Select Vestry has been responsible in the period for making decisions on matters of general concern and importance to the parish including deciding how the parish funds have been allocated.

The Select Vestry met 8 times in the period and the average attendance was 12.

## **FINANCIAL REVIEW**

The income for the parish from various sources was £192542 with payments of £192823 giving a deficit of £281. The Bank and Cash Balance as at 31 December 2023 were £132733 (of this balance £44271 were unrestricted funds, £88462 restricted funds and £Nil endowment funds).

It is the Trustees' policy to hold sufficient reserves to cover unexpected emergencies and have adequate funds for maintenance of church property and to further the objectives and activities of the parish.

## **GOING CONCERN**

The Trustees have reviewed the budgets for the year ahead and are satisfied that there are adequate funds in place to ensure the parish can continue its activities and the financial statements for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023 can be signed off as a going concern.

## **COMPLIANCE WITH PUBLIC BENEFIT**

The Trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit to ensure that the activities entered into during the year have helped to achieve the parish's objectives and activities, as well as providing public benefit.

## **STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES**

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the statement of receipts and payments and assets and liabilities in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

The law applicable to charities in Northern Ireland with Income of less than £250,000 requires the trustees to prepare a statement of receipts and payments and a statement of assets and liabilities for each financial year.

The trustees are responsible for keeping accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the parish's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the assets and liabilities of the parish. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the parish and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

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Signed on Behalf of the Trustees -

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Rector/Chair: Rev Paul McAdam

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Treasurer: Elizabeth Reid

Date: 16<sup>th</sup> February 2024

