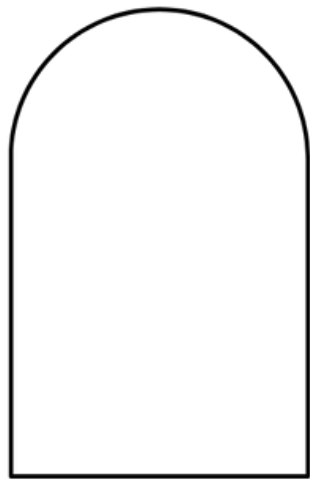


AGM

Report



Saint Catherine's Church

2024

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Introduction

Lead Pastor | Rev Eoghan Heaslip

2023 was another really great year for Saint Catherine's.

I'm proud of all we've done and grateful for how things have continued to develop across the life of the church.

This book of reports is very much the shared story of, not just the stellar work our staff team does, but also reflects the huge amount of time, effort, care and organisation poured out by many, without which our church family just wouldn't be the same.

I hope you are as encouraged as I am as you read about all that's been happening, the heart behind it and the growing sense we have of all God has yet to do.

With great love,

Eoghan Heaslip | **Lead Pastor**

April 2024

Pastoral Report

Assistant Pastor | Louise Jones

As Assistant Pastor, I have the privilege of working alongside the **staff team**, helping to develop key areas of ministry that shape the overarching culture of the church. As we continue to pay attention to where the Spirit is leading us, it is so encouraging to reflect on the last year and appreciate where He has been at work.

This past year, there has been a significant number of new people through the doors of Saint Catherine's. As a result, we have paid particular attention to our **Newcomers** area, making our Connect Point more visible with new signage, and our welcome more intentional by developing a Newcomers team. We have just held our 5th newcomers evening where those who are newly integrating into the church have the opportunity to join some of the staff team for a meal at the Heaslip house and hear a little bit more about who we are and what's important to us as a church. These have been thoroughly enjoyable evenings and a significant place of connection for all.

Both **Christmas** and **Easter**, as always are significant times of our church calendar, and equally, are great opportunities into which we can invite friends and family. We have learnt how valuable it is to offer various "access points" into the life of the church and it has been exciting to see how many have taken up the invitation to come to our Christmas and Easter gatherings, Create for Christmas and Create for Easter workshops and our Holy week events. Other outreach events have included various '**Crafternoons**' throughout the year where women are invited to come together for an afternoon of connection, sweet treats and crafting. We also launched a new event called '**Questions of Life**' which offered those exploring faith a safe space for healthy conversations and an opportunity to share different perspectives on life and faith in an enjoyable and enriching way.

As we journey into 2024, we are committed to surrendering Saint Catherine's to God, and praying for Him to do what only He can do. If you would like to join us in prayer, we meet every Thursday 12-1 at the church. If you have any personal prayer requests, please do get in touch and our intercessory team will be ready to pray.

Youth Report

Assistant Pastor | Shane Maguire

Reflecting on all God has been doing in our young people's lives since the beginning of the school year has been so encouraging. We have seen our young people draw closer together this year through our times of worship, prayer and the shared reading of scripture. A special thanks to all of our youth leaders who contribute and sacrifice so much to support our young people.

One of the most exciting parts of my role is our work in the local school. We had the privilege of running both **NUA**: a fresh perspective on faith and **RISE**: A leadership course helping young people become sources of hope for their **community**, with the 5th years and student council, this past term. We engaged with about 55 students over an 8 week period and got to share the love of Jesus, as well as equipping young people to make a positive impact in their community.

Alongside our gatherings on Fridays and Sundays, we participated in some wider events as a youth ministry, one of those being **Signal Fires**, a new gathering across the island for young people to worship and pray together. We were shocked when we opened the doors last May to see over 180 young people waiting to join us to pray for our nation and city. Last November we hosted our annual **One Youth Conference**, seeing over 100 young people and their leaders join us for a day of teaching, prayer and practices. We love seeing the building being used to facilitate young people encountering Jesus and learn what it means to follow Him.

This year we were excited to launch our **Prayer & Bible Study online** on Tuesday evenings over Zoom. A significant story comes from a young person who joins us from boarding school, but is unable to put their camera or mic on due to being in the common room. Yet they have found a time in the week to feel supported in their faith, encounter God in the scriptures and receive prayer. What an encouragement to know God is at work in the digital space with our young people. It is still as difficult as ever for young people to walk through life, but as we've focused on the value of **pastoral care** and **community**, we've seen many young people find hope, healing and a sense of belonging this year.

Children's Report

Children & Families Pastor | Taylor Mehl

This has been a year of both growth and settling in Children and Families ministry! In the midst of several new families with children joining the church, we have further developed the value-based rhythms of 1) **intentional discipleship times on a Sunday** and 2) **resourcing at-home discipleship**. We purchased a year-long resource called **GROW Curriculum** in September 2023 and it has empowered a cohort of new leaders within the ministry on Sundays and provided material to engage with midweek. The addition of several young adults to the volunteer team has brought fresh enthusiasm to the ministry and another layer of intergenerational connection.

The **family room** at the back of the church has been refreshed with the help of a few keen parents and continues to grow into a hosted hub of connection for parents/carers of toddlers and babies on a Sunday. It feels like the overall inclusion of children within the Sunday space is settling more and more into a shared, joyous value. The help of both volunteers and parents this year has been deeply encouraging to me, not just in their practical service, but in their passionate partnership with the vision of the ministry, and I cannot thank them enough!

Mainly Music has experienced a fluctuating attendance between new parents who join during parental leave, to curious visits from mums within the Dublin 8 community. It has been a privilege to provide a fun and loving space for parents/carers of little ones and similar to children's ministry on a Sunday, the intergenerational relationships have been such a special element on offer through Mainly Music.

Ciara Herman and I have recently begun to engage with the **local community** more, through prayer, posters and chats, with the hope that more families would be connected in and experience the joy and transformation of God's presence through this ministry! I am encouraged by the faithful group of volunteers who bake and host and sing and pray every week-thank you all!

Young Adults Report

Children & Families Pastor | Taylor Mehl

There is just no denying that God's hand continues to rest on this specific age-group within the church family! It feels like every other week there are new 'twenty-somethings' showing up on a Sunday and being invited into our rhythms of eating together and Bible study by the young adults already in the community. After finishing up the '**Find Your Place/Take Your Place**' coaching sessions with Sam Moore (Innovista), we have seen the core group of young leaders take initiative hosting and facilitating within the group rhythms, but also serving with every other ministry in the life of the church. I hope to keep making space for them to lead and learn to discern and engage with where God is at work.

We hosted our second **Spring Retreat**, taking twelve people up to Murlough House for an interactive prayer journey through the story of the Prodigal Son. This was a key time of connection with each other and with the Father's heart. This living message of unconditional love and habitual 'returning' is weekly fleshed out by the Poston family as they host and reach out to the young adults. Their role in the growth of this community has been central, and I am grateful beyond words for their constant carrying of both the vision and people of this group!

We're looking forward now to the gradual extension of this ministry through a "**cluster of community houses**", a word that God spoke so clearly at a Vineyard conference last October and is slowly but surely bringing into fruition. There are a couple of families who live within close proximity to the Poston home who hope to start hosting and pouring into the young adults, and in just a few weeks Rachel Heaslip and I will be moving into a house close by as well. Our prayer is that the invitation into spiritual formation that these young adults have said yes to, would have a joyous ripple effect into the neighbourhoods that we're meeting in and beyond!

Worship Report

Assistant Pastor | Louise Jones

Worship at Saint Catherine's continues to be a special place of encounter with our Living God and I'm so grateful for the team of generous and dedicated musicians and sound volunteers that make this possible. It has been an answered prayer to grow the team, and we are excited at making it a more integrative space for younger members to get involved and grow their giftings. We were delighted to be invited to lead worship at the recent National Alpha Conference held in The Riasc Centre, where we were able to serve their vision of an Ireland exploring faith and the Christian Life. As we step into this next season, my prayer is that we would move deeper into communion with God as we worship, that our hunger to encounter Him would grow even more, and that as a surrendered people God would display His glory to us and through us to the world around us.

Media Report

Assistant Pastor | Shane Maguire

This year we made the decision to replace our 20 year old **sound system**. We worked diligently with a number of companies to find the right fit for us, and we're delighted to say we went with Creative Technology. Work will start this April and once completed, they will train our whole team on how to use it and will be on standby for the next year. We are so grateful to have a fresh new system and look forward to the difference it will make to our gatherings and use of the space.

Towards the end of last summer, we began the process of creating a fresh new **website**. We had to overcome several challenges in order to move information from the old website to the new one. A special thank you to Paul Shirley for his work with us on this project. Last October we decided to bring in a professional photographer, Darren Bourke, to take a number of shots for our website. We're delighted with the result and hope to continue to steward the digital space well.

Hospitality Report

Hospitality Team Lead | Chrissy Geiger

“And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.” Acts 2:46

The area of hospitality has experienced significant change and growth this year. Freda Wolfe, the main catalyst for growth within the team, stepped down from the role of Hospitality Pastor – due to a move away from Dublin. The role was officially transitioned in January 2024 to Chrissy Geiger, who spent the months leading up to it shadowing Freda. During the transition Chrissy worked closely with Sharon and it became abundantly clear that hospitality would best thrive if the Sunday morning team and church lunches were divided. The role and title “Hospitality Pastor” was dissolved and Chrissy took over as the **Hospitality Team Lead**, focused solely on overseeing the **Sunday morning Café Team**.

The Café Team currently has five Team Leaders serving on a 5-week rotation, with nineteen Team Members. The scheduled rotation is the same people each week with the intention to: 1. make scheduling easier, 2. reduce over-booking and service burnout 3. build/strengthen relationships within the team and 4. allow space for new team members to easily join. The current café rotation for Sunday mornings includes one Team Leader and three Team Members. This is the minimum requirement for an efficient Sunday service.

Easter Sunday was a highlight where a team shortage opened an opportunity for non-hospitality team members to step in and serve. Rob Kelly recruited a team of seven men and led them to set-up, cook, prep, serve, and clean up a full breakfast before the Easter Sunday gathering. Our prayer for 2024 is that leaders are disciplined and built up from within the team and new people will join and we'll have 6 teams of 5 people rotating regularly by 2025.

Prayer & Presence Report

Prayer & Presence Team Lead | Steve Thomas

Prayer and Presence Ministry is an exciting opportunity to experience the kingdom of God whether by praying for someone or receiving ministry. In Saint Catherine's our foundational values are that prayer and presence ministry needs to be: positive and life giving, Holy Spirit led, respectful, inclusive (for all) and transparent (accountable) with a well-trained and prepared team.

I am excited to see that recently the Holy Spirit has been increasing His tangible presence in our times of ministry and that we are experiencing increased numbers of healings, encounters with God and answered prayers. We have developed a core team of **overseers** for the ministry who are well-trained, trusted and experienced in following God's lead in prayer times. We are also discussing and exploring different modes of prayer ministry on a Sunday to bring blessing, favour and encouragement to all. As we expand into this ministry we will be training up more people to bring God's love and abundant life to everyone in our church family.

Safeguarding Report

SGT Panel | Andrew Smith & Lynne Kennedy

Saint Catherine's is committed to safeguarding children by working under the guidance of the Church of Ireland's national safeguarding policy, Safeguarding Trust. The Safeguarding Trust panel, consisting of Rev Eoghan Heaslip, Lynne Kennedy and Andrew Smith, has continued its work over the past year. We meet four times a year and submit regular reports for Trustee meetings. During 2023 we had many new volunteers, all of whom were Garda vetted and received SGT training. We have submitted our 2023 online report to the Church of Ireland Safeguarding Trust authority. Every three years there is an SGT audit and Saint Catherine's is due to be audited in May 2024. The panel remains available to any member of Saint Catherine's and should you have any questions or concerns about our safeguarding practices email sgt@saintcatherines.ie.

Strategy Report

Strategy & Development Lead | Andrew McNeile

It has been a joy and a privilege to join the Staff Team in the role of strategy and development. I started in September 2023, as I was still working commercially two days a week, but as I retired commercially in December 2023, I have been able to focus on this role more fully.

A key part of the role is to act as a soundboard and support to Eoghan as he leads the church – but also to assist with some of the strategic and operational planning aspects as God opens up doors for us in the future.

A further part of my work is to provide some input into the Church of Ireland central pioneering ministry, which aims to plant churches across the country. This dovetails neatly with what we have been planning with Shane, which you would've heard about recently at the Sunday announcement (April 14) and about which we are very excited, as it marks a key step towards the vision of a family of churches in Dublin.

Much of the work is seeking to support Eoghan's vision for the expansion of the church's ministry, as he feels the Lord is leading him and how we can effectively resource those expansion plans. We are also keen that the audio, video and online aspects of the church's work are presented in as optimal a manner as possible and are making investments to achieve this.

It is also a joy to be supporting Sharon, who covers such a significant operational breadth with a fabulous attention to detail which has been such a huge benefit to the trustees and the church alike.

Operations Report

Executive Pastor | Sharon Ross

As Executive Pastor I oversee and lead the operational functions of Saint Catherine's, including administration of the building/facilities, finances and office/HR. This change was made at the last AGM, replacing the ops committee, and I am supported in this role by the trustees, our Caretaker and several volunteers from within the church who dedicate their time and energy to help me.

It has been another year bursting with activity as many people continue to come through our doors, both on Sundays and during the week. This enhances our commitment to maintaining our 250 year old **building** so it continues to be a safe and welcoming space for everyone who uses it. As well as facilitating the ministries of the church, it is also a hub of activity for the local community such as the Solas Project, college exams, end of year ceremonies for local schools, orchestras, choirs and much more. We love this community engagement and pray for more!

Aside from regular maintenance, we commissioned a report on our decorative plasterwork, monitored cracks in the ceiling and finished the repair of our external clock. We've also had to overcome a complicated water leak, as well as other maintenance challenges, expertly managed by our Caretaker Alex McMullin. A huge thank you to Ronan Plant for his significant contribution to identifying and fixing our water leak and Peter Gannon for power washing all our external flagstones. And thank you to Rob Kelly for his continued input on the restoration and repair of the building. Future plans include a reimagining of the space and updating the 1998 renovation, as well as plans for the building adjacent to us. Watch this space.

The church **finances** will be reported on by our Treasurer, John McNicholas, below. From a **HR** perspective our hope and prayer is that Saint Catherine's would be a fantastic place to work. Thank you to Marian Bergin who volunteers her time as our HR Consultant, keeping us up to date on the latest HR policies and employment legislation. Last October we had the privilege of investing in our staff by taking the team to Belfast for a 2 day Vineyard conference. It was a highlight for many of us and we were so refreshed by our time together, soaking in deep worship and receiving prophetic prayer that has greatly impacted our ministries.

Finance Report

Treasurer | John McNicholas

On balance, the accounts for 2023 shows a broadly positive year. Our income has continued to grow, which is to be welcomed and indeed has been a target over recent years. On the expenditure side we have invested into valuable areas for the church's future including youth, mainly music, and expanding young adults ministry in 2023. The church building also continues to be renovated and upgraded, which has resulted in more additional costs and expenses than in 2022, but these are welcome upgrades and works.

The deficit less depreciation of €20,649 is something that I am conscious of managing throughout 2024 to ensure expenditure remains reasonably in line with income. Overall the cash position of the church remains stable, and with the welcome increased income is in a good position in 2024 to meet the ongoing needs of Saint Catherine's.

Connect Report

Executive Pastor | Sharon Ross

As Louise has shared, our Newcomers Ministry has been growing and I have been continuing to develop it alongside her, as one of our central focuses. You may have seen the new Connect Point that we've been developing into a hub of connection at the back of church. The culture of hospitality starts with a warm welcome from the Welcome Team and if you are new to Saint Catherine's you may have met one of our Newcomers Team who are there to help you feel at ease or answer any of your questions. We are also at our Connect Point after our gatherings, to answer questions about giving, serving, midweek communities or events. Louise has been creating social spaces for newcomers to meet the staff team and each other by hosting several Newcomers Dinners in Eoghan and Becky's home. Feedback has been how people have felt welcomed from the first moment they came into Saint Catherine's. We are praying that God would continue to inspire us with new and creative ways of connecting and meeting together as a community.

Tithe Partners Report

Tithe Partners Liaison | Joy Watts

It has been my privilege again in this past year to link in with our Tithe Partners and inform our community in Saint Catherine's of their current prayer needs via the designated notice board (now behind the Coffee Dock). Anyone who is new to Saint Catherine's may not realise that 10% of our general Sunday offerings, no matter how we give them, goes to our five Tithe Partners. Each of these organisations have an ethos that is consistent with Saint Catherine's vision and values. They are **African Enterprise, Innovista, Jobcare, Solas Project and Tearfund Ireland.**

Tearfund Ireland is involved in life-changing projects in Ethiopia, Yemen and Cambodia. In March 2023, we had a visit from Mulugeta, from Ethiopia. We watched a video presentation of their work partnering with groups of 15-20 local women, teaching them new skills through Self-Help Groups, and enabling them to lift themselves out of poverty and provide good nutrition for their families. In my interview with Mulugeta and we found out more about this work.

It was great to interview Amy Carey about Solas Project in November 2023 and to hear firsthand about all the programmes that they run within our local area of the Liberties, and beyond, helping 100's of children and young people know their self-worth and take full advantage of their potential.

We also partner with Jobcare who run employment courses and work experience programmes; Innovista who are involved in the training and building up leaders in Ireland; and Saint Catherine's specifically funds "Foxfires", African Enterprise's year-long evangelistic outreach programme for young African people, who seek to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to cities and towns across Africa. During 2024/25, I'm planning interviews with these partners.

It is a privilege for us to be involved in so many great initiatives via Saint Catherine's, and our giving and prayers make a huge difference to each Tithe Partner and are so appreciated by them.