

Presbyterian
CHURCH IN IRELAND

Herald

APRIL 2020

DON'T BE
ALARMED
HE IS RISEN!
YOU
WILL
SEE HIM



***I was hungry
and you gave me
something to eat***

Matthew 25:35

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**FSC
LOGO**

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Fear vs trust



As I write, the Covid-19 pandemic is sweeping the world and panic, fear and hysteria levels are extremely high. People are thirsty for information and advice and as Christians we have added questions about how to respond in a biblical way. Is it wrong to stockpile food, or should I prepare to provide for my family, friends and those in need? How can I speak and act in a way that will proclaim the good news of Jesus to those who don't know him?

In situations like this, our natural human instinct is one of self-preservation and therefore it is perhaps hard to get a balance between taking sensible actions and making sure we think of others first, especially the more vulnerable members of our society. In her 'Life lessons', Sophie de Witt says she finds the most difficult thing about being a Christian is "being obedient to God's Word and not justifying my selfishness". I imagine this pandemic will test us all to the core when it comes to our selfishness. As one message circulating social media highlighted: starvation causes 25,000 deaths a day, but unlike Covid-19, we don't hear about it because Covid-19 affects the rich – starvation doesn't.

Cecil Graham raises another important issue in this edition, also largely neglected – the persecution of Christians. Reporting on an interesting debate in the House of Commons, he shares the sobering statistic that 260 million Christians around the world were at risk of persecution in 2019. In China 5,500 churches were destroyed, closed down, or confiscated. Cecil's article gives us much food for thought and prayer points to consider.

Kevin Hargaden addresses another worrying issue – homelessness. He sets out the shocking reality of the scale of this problem, particularly in the Republic of Ireland, challenging the Christian community that we need to do more: "The myth that we cannot help has become stronger than the fact that we can..." Kevin promotes a new resource, published by the Irish Council of Churches to help congregations tackle it practically and prayerfully.

As we approach Easter, it is good to be reminded that we serve the living Jesus, who fully displayed his power and majesty when he triumphed over death on the cross. In his Easter reflection, Dr David Clarke reminds us that no matter what we are facing, Jesus goes before us. Despite our fears and anxieties, we can trust in him. "Fear, which has large eyes, dreads the future, but faith moves confidently forward."

Wishing you a happy and healthy Easter from everyone in the *Herald* office.

Sarah Harding

LETTERS

Mental health

Dear Editor

A friend, knowing my interest in mental health (I was chair of the Scottish Association for Mental Health for six years), passed me a copy of the February edition of the *Herald*. I am minded to offer some further perspectives.

In my view, it is not just 'part of Christian life' to listen to others suffering some sort of mental anguish: it is part of everyone's life to encourage those who need to talk. The biggest challenge for us is to listen – and some of us are not very good that!

A religious perspective is not necessarily the best way forward. The suicide intervention training that we introduced in Glasgow a number of years ago – which included the families of those who had been bereaved (that was so important) – suggested that discussion of the love of God etc. is not necessarily helpful. Indeed, to raise 'the love of God' can be distinctly unhelpful as it can heighten the sense of guilt. One of the participants was a minister and he said that he took off his collar when "talking someone from the brink".

One day, a suicidal young woman on a train talked to me for nearly two hours – God was never mentioned. But there was a divine intervention! She mentioned an uncle, Mr Stewart, lived in Linlithgow. There were 30 Stewarts in the telephone directory, and the first number we dialled was his. He came to meet her and off they went.

Exactly one year later, a stunning young woman came up to me in Glasgow Central: she hugged me and said "thank you" and off she went. I still don't know her name

and she does not know mine!
God moves in mysterious ways!

*David Denton
Belfast*

An all-age Church

Dear Editor

As an older member of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, I wish to share some of my concerns. While I realise that the Church has to adapt to the modern age, it is important to remember that people of all ages attend it.

Therefore, there should be a balance between the use of traditional and modern music in the Church. Personally, I miss the singing of the psalms and paraphrases in church. They contain wonderful teaching from God's Word, which would benefit people of all ages.

Today there is a trend to move away from sacred to secular activities during the week without any spiritual input. A short epilogue at the end of each activity would be sufficient. We are instructed in the Bible to 'make disciples' of the Lord Jesus Christ. This involves building young Christians up in their faith.

When I was a child, I came to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour after a special children's service in a Presbyterian church. As children we were instructed to sit quietly in church and respect the sanctity of God's house. Sadly, many children and adults seem to have lost this sense of respect in church.

Finally, it is important to realise that God blesses unity in Christian service, so we should



Letters to the Editor

Write to: Presbyterian Herald, Assembly Buildings, Belfast, BT1 6DW

Email: herald@presbyterianireland.org

Please note: Letters are limited to 300 words and may be edited for clarity and length. They will only be published in the *Herald* if the author's name and address have been supplied to the Editor. On request these will be withheld from print. Anonymous letters will not be considered for publication. The views expressed in the letters are not necessarily those of the Editor or PCI.

try at all costs to live peaceably with our fellow Christians.

Name and address supplied

Thanks from Christian Aid

Dear Editor

I am writing to express our sincere thanks to PCI for your continued and very generous support of the work of Christian Aid Ireland. This includes funds donated from the 2019 World Development Appeal and the Moderator's Special Appeals for Indonesia and Cyclone Idai.

The World Development Appeal will support a range of projects working to address inequalities and help the most vulnerable people in countries including Angola, Bangladesh, Burundi, and Israel Occupied Palestinian Territories.

An estimated three million people have been affected by Cyclone Idai in Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe with hundreds of people having lost their lives and many thousands losing their homes. Christian Aid has been working with our local partners on the ground in Zimbabwe and Malawi to help provide much-needed emergency assistance to those who are most in need.

Your support has helped people like Selena Feleeski from Malawi. One evening in March 2019, Selena noticed water coming into her house. And then more water, and then more. She fled with her family to a nearby school and watched as the floods destroyed almost everything she owned. Thanks to Christian Aid's emergency response work, Selena received some maize seeds and money to help rebuild her home in the immediate aftermath of the flooding.

Selena was orphaned at five years old, and then raised by an uncle until he too

died. She had few options in life and got married at a young age. Because of the practical assistance Selena has received, which you helped to provide, she has hope for more opportunities for her six children.

"I just want the children to have a different life from what I had. My hope for the future is that if they go to school, they will be better off."

Thank you for your continuing prayerful support.

*Rosamond Bennett
CEO Christian Aid Ireland*

Benedictions

Dear Editor

Are we losing the blessing of blessings? Many of our services end with a flat (in my view) recital of the Grace (2 Corinthians 13:14).

Drew Hunter puts it well that a blessing is "not just a sacred way of saying, 'You're dismissed'. The benediction bridges the end of a worship service and the beginning of the week of worship to come. It takes the grace God gave during the service and lets it cross over into our lives as we go. It launches us into our neighbourhoods, schools, and workplaces with God's blessing." (www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/5-reasons-benedictions-church/ which lists the main scriptural benedictions.)

Some fine speakers end their benedictions with something like, "As you truly trust in God". This leaves me uneasy, both because it adds something that is not in the biblical text and it is as if the sermon is continuing, whereas the point of a blessing is not that we are exhorted primarily at that point to believe, but are encouraged, with the assumption of faith, to enjoy God in his fullness. I know that Romans 15:13 says beautifully,

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him" but even there, the blessing ends with a wonderful promise to the believer: "...so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

Much worse is ending a benediction "...and with those whom you love". That is so excluding and unbiblical. Better "...with those whom you love and those whom you find hard to love" which reflects 1 Corinthians 13 and Jesus' command to love your enemies.

*John Faris
Retired minister, Carnalea*

Tribute

Dear Editor

Many of your readers will remember a good man and great friend of the Mastery Foundation, Rev Brian Kennaway who sadly passed away recently.

Always a maverick who spoke his mind, I still remember him coming to me to ask if he could pass out a pamphlet on the Orange Order, which he dearly loved. At the same time, he regularly took the Order to task for anything and everything he saw as narrow-mindedness or hypocrisy.

Brian really liked Mastery and the people he encountered there, and we liked him. Among many other things he served on the Parades Commission for three years and kept a blog for the purpose of sharing his writing and opinions on religion,

politics and social affairs.

Brian loved a good conversation and a good story. He had a great knowledge of history and a real, intellectual curiosity. He loved to talk, but he was a sharp listener as well, who demonstrated a lovely open-heartedness and warmth. I imagine that many of the individuals and organisations that Brian took to task saw him as a gadfly – and he was that, in the true sense of someone who challenges the status quo and those in positions of power. Yet particularly now when it seems people's comments and opinions are often mean-spirited, Brian took pains to be polite and respectful.

Because he spoke his mind, however – and spoke it well – I suspect Brian was more well-known than he was popular. That didn't seem to bother him. The Methodist minister, William Russell Maltby, said Jesus promised his followers three things – that they would be entirely fearless, absurdly happy, and always in trouble. That was Brian.

With great thanksgiving for his life and example, his ministry of love and difference-making, and his friendship.

*Ann Overton
The Mastery Foundation
(A non-profit, interfaith
organisation working in the
area of reconciliation)*



Herald Extra

The *Presbyterian Herald* has launched a podcast to delve deeper behind some of each issue's articles.

To listen for free to the existing articles or subscribe, go to <https://audioboom.com/channel/presbyterianireland> or search for 'Herald Extra' in your favourite podcast software.

COVID-19 emergency

Over recent weeks, like many across the community, PCI has been monitoring closely the continuing and evolving daily situation in relation to the Covid-19 emergency. During this time guidance has been issued to ministers and PCI's residential and care homes, along with and other outreach ministries. The Moderator, Dr William Henry, has also written to ministers to encourage them at this uncertain time.

The Moderator and Clerk of the General Assembly, Rev Trevor Gribben, wrote to ministers on St Patrick's Day informing them that in light of guidance from both the UK and Irish governments, all congregational organisations and activities, including Sunday worship, should cease until further notice.

In a statement, Mr Gribben described taking the decision with 'heartfelt sadness'. He continued by saying, "Without doubt we live in deeply uncertain and unprecedented times, with almost every day bringing challenging bulletins and new announcements. While it is only natural that we feel a sense of unease and anxiety, we put our trust in God who can do immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine..."

"While we have taken this decision until further notice, we have also encouraged congregations to find creative and virtual ways to worship, and we will support them in that. At the same time, I know that where they can, our congregations will continue to support those in need, going that extra mile, quietly and compassionately in the name of Jesus, during this time of difficulty."

His statement also encouraged people to pray for all affected by the virus, especially for those suffering from it, for the vulnerable, the self-isolating and those working and caring in the frontline.

You can read the full statement at www.presbyterianireland.org. You will also find details of all cancelled or postponed centrally organised PCI events. At the time of going to print, online services for congregational use and other resources are currently in production.

Protect yourself and others from getting sick

Wash your hands

- after coughing or sneezing
- when caring for the sick
- before and after you prepare food
- before eating
- after toilet use
- when hands are visibly dirty
- after touching cuts, blisters or any open sores
- you can use alcohol hand rub, if hands are not visibly dirty



HSC Public Health Agency



CATCH IT.

BIN IT.

KILL IT.

Abortion plea

Over 2,200 people have signed a letter to UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, urging him to clarify that disability-selective abortion for Down's syndrome will not be introduced to Northern Ireland. This coincides with a Freedom of Information request revealing that 710 late-term abortions (between 20 weeks and birth) for Down's syndrome have taken place in England and Wales over the last 10 years (2009-2018). The figures are likely to be much higher – a 2013 review showed 886 foetuses were aborted for Down's syndrome in England and Wales in 2010 but only 482 were reported in Department of Health records. The under-reporting was confirmed by a 2014 Department of Health review.

Dozens of families who have signed the letter have shared photos of their children with Down's syndrome on social media to help send a strong message to Mr Johnson.

The UK government has released a consultation on proposed abortion regulations for Northern Ireland. The government



is not required by Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc.) Act 2019 to introduce abortion for Down's syndrome to Northern Ireland. The government is now proposing to go further than they are required to do by the Act and has opted to introduce abortion for Down's syndrome to Northern Ireland in the proposed legal framework.

The consultation document outlines that abortion will be available:

- Through to either 12 or 14 weeks on request. This will allow abortion on request for any reason, which will include conditions such as Down's syndrome;
- Through to either 22 or 24 weeks on 'mental health' grounds;
- Through to birth for 'foetal abnormality' providing that: "The foetus if



born would suffer a severe impairment, including a mental or physical disability which is likely to significantly limit either the length or quality of the child's life".

Don't Screen Us Out campaigners have concerns that under the proposed wording in the framework, without a clear provision stating otherwise, abortion will be available in practice through to birth for Down's syndrome.

Lynn Murray, spokesperson for Don't Screen Us Out, said, "We are calling on the government to urgently clarify that they will not introduce abortion for Down's syndrome to Northern Ireland. All that is required is for the government to commit to add a simple provision to the abortion framework that will clearly outline that abortion for Down's syndrome will explicitly not be allowed. The proposed framework would likely lead to a big increase in abortion for congenital conditions detected pre-birth in Northern Ireland, and would reduce the numbers of our already very small community. This would have a devastating impact on the community of people with Down's syndrome in Northern Ireland. Our attitude towards people with disabilities has changed and our laws must reflect that."



Union Theological College proposals

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland has released a statement regarding Union Theological College and a proposed validation relationship with St Mary's University, Twickenham.



Rev Trevor Gribben (Clerk of the General Assembly and General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland) said, "The 2019 General Assembly appointed a Commission to consider recommendations from the Faculty and Management Committee of Union Theological College, and other relevant bodies, regarding the College's future. Having considered these recommendations, the Commission was tasked with presenting firm and definite proposals to enable the 2020 General Assembly to make final decisions. This process is now at an advanced stage and the Commission has finalised its recommendations for the General Assembly.

"The vision for Union College moving forward includes three important strands: First, equipping students for effective ministry within PCI; secondly, the provision of postgraduate programmes; and thirdly, preparing students for making effective and positive contributions to society. To achieve fully these goals, an undergraduate programme is necessary and the recommended way forward is through a validation arrangement with another UK institution.

"Following a detailed process and discussions, it will be recommended to this year's General Assembly that a new undergraduate partnership should be developed with St Mary's University, Twickenham, through a validation arrangement. Such a partnership, once agreed by the General Assembly and St Mary's, has the potential to lead to a new and exciting future for Union College. This was the aspiration of last year's General Assembly, especially in terms of flexibility for training in ministry, an increased student experience and broader academic outcomes."

Commenting on the proposed validation partnership, Prof Stafford Carson, principal of Union Theological College, said, "Founded in the 1850s, both Union College and St Mary's have their own distinct confessional identities within a broad Christian ethos. The proposed validation arrangement, which needs to be discussed and approved at this year's General Assembly, would preserve Union's confessional identity and control of its own academic programmes. Just as importantly, it would also restore the option for young people from all backgrounds, including different denominations from across Northern Ireland, to study theology together at an undergraduate level."



St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London



Considering Grace

We are disappointed that it will no longer be possible to unpack the impact of *Considering Grace: Presbyterians and the Troubles* as we had. We hope to reschedule the event for later in the year when we also launch a resource to help congregations and other small groups unpack some of themes emerging from the book – themes like lament, remembering and forgiveness. However, we are pleased to let you know that another batch of books has just arrived with us here in Assembly Buildings. If you haven't already had an opportunity to read *Considering Grace* now is the perfect time to order your own copy at www.presbyterianireland.org/consideringgrace

IN BRIEF

Christian Endeavour Convention

Sowing the Seed is the theme of the 106th Irish National Christian Endeavour Convention which is being held on Saturday 19 September, in Ballyhenry Presbyterian Church.

Rev Jimmy Warburton, minister of High Street Presbyterian Church in Hollywood, is the main speaker.

The event will see Russ Armour, from Newtownards, installed as Irish CE Union President in succession to Ruth Agnew, from Tandragee.

Further information is available at conventioninformation@gmail.com

Presbyterian Historical Society

The next meeting of the Presbyterian Historical Society is due to take place in Assembly Buildings, Belfast on Wednesday 15 April.

Tom Harley will speak on the theme 'Old Belfast Presbyterian churches'.

SASRA hymn

A new hymn has been specially written for the Soldiers' and Airmen's Scripture Readers Association (SASRA).



For the past 180 years Scripture readers have gone 'behind the wire' to share the good news of Christ. Now renowned hymn-writer, Bishop Timothy Dudley-Smith, has taken the purpose and vision of SASRA to pen the words of a new hymn, *Praise God For Those Who Brought Us*.

IN THIS MONTH... *April 1978*

Dipping into the archives to take a look back at what was making Presbyterian headlines and news in history.

The death penalty – a call for its reintroduction

James Campbell

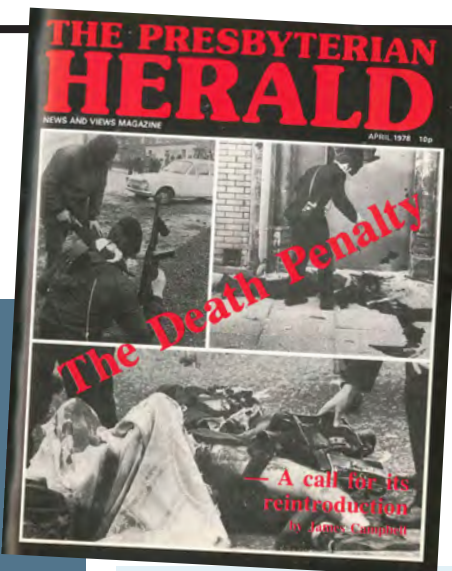
La Mon, Kingsmills, Claudy, The Abercorn. They are not unconnected place names: they summon up painful memories of episodes in a long campaign of brutal murder. Most of the events have faded from memory, but still they live on in the memory of friends and those bereaved.

Many feel the government policy for dealing with the terrorists is weak and ineffective. On one point, feeling is most strong. Murderers, when caught, are not being punished with the severity that their crime deserves. They deserve the death penalty.

...many Christians will query if capital punishment, which they say is so punitive and vengeful, can be justified in the light of Christ's teaching. It must be understood that vengeance is only unchristian when it is the individual's reaction to his fellow. When someone wrongs us and we determine to pay them back, then we are being vengeful and unchristian. It is perfectly right for the state to make a person pay back in full for the wrong he has done...

When there is no death sentence, what real sanctions exist to help control dangerous men? Anyone serving a life sentence has really little to fear if he kills a warder or a fellow prisoner in a brawl. What can 'they' do to him?

...While we are careful not to call for capital punishment just because the public demands it, we should, nevertheless, pay heed to their voice. It is some 30 years since an IRA terrorist has been executed. It is little wonder that the clamour for the death penalty is increasing. An instinctive sense of justice demands it...



Lighthouse Bibles

Dr Charles Prescho

Lighthouse Bibles...and why not? After all, we have Hotel Bibles, School Bibles and so on. Lighthouse Bibles are now in that category.

When the Commissioners of Irish Lights were recently approached for permission to place a Good News Bible in lighthouses and lightvessels around Ireland, they readily accepted and, when the task was completed, we received a letter of appreciation.

There are 29 lighthouses and four lightvessels doing service around Ireland. When the go-ahead was given 33 Bibles were soon on their way.

Two sources of light, then, characterise each situation, one natural and the other spiritual. One gives its lights in flashes to assist the sailing community, the other gives light, steadily and continually, by the Spirit of God, when used aright...

Stay at home Communion

Plans by Southern Television to broadcast a Communion service during which viewers at home will be invited to take part using their own bread and wine have evoked a strong reaction from Rev Colin Buchanan, vice-principal of St John's College, Nottingham.

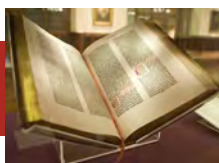
He claims it would "entrench still further the idea that worship is something you can do individually in your own home..."



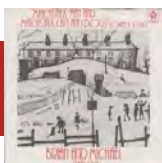
Easter party

A party mainly from the Dromore Presbytery went to Egypt for Easter. Palm Sunday was spent in Cairo, where they attended a service in St Andrew's United Church. Easter Sunday was spent in Luxor where a church was borrowed from an Arabic-speaking evangelical denomination for a Communion service. The party was accompanied by Rev Bertie Moore and Rev Jim Irvine, who was the leader.

Also from
April '78



A Gutenberg Bible
sells for \$2m in
New York City



Matchstalk Men and
Matchstalk Cats and Dogs
tops UK singles chart



Diane Keaton wins best
actress Oscar for her
performance in *Annie Hall*

MY STORY...

Patricia*, from a Presbyterian church in Dublin, shares her story of being a foster parent.

Welcoming the little ones



The words most commonly associated with fostering and defined in several dictionaries is to “encourage, nurture, support and care for a child or children to whom you are not their birth parents”.

Isn't it so easy to pick out words like these and hope that everyone will be able to understand what exactly fostering is all about? Yes, these words are important and a real part of fostering, but there's a great deal more to absorb and I hope by relating some of our family's experiences, it will become a little clearer.

We decided to become foster carers 19 years ago, encouraged by some friends in our church who were already fostering, to put ourselves forward and see what the outcome would be. We did not enter into this lightly but began the process knowing that doors would open if they were meant to – in other words we took a leap of faith.

The process took time and patience which acted as an enabler to allow us to think through all of the issues. For those who are not acquainted with this process, it is a series of interviews with a social worker followed by intense training in order to equip you to take on the role. This is a very important time in the fostering journey as it's a time of preparing for what is to come and as fear of the unknown can play a part, this time is vital for preparation. From the beginning it was a family affair which was of the utmost importance to us as we have two daughters.

It was a real learning curve for all of us but one which would indeed enable us to complete the requirements to become foster carers. To a certain degree it was an educational process, as we learned about the different types and levels of carers. For example, some of the options were long or short-term care, respite care for other foster families, and emergency fostering. There were age brackets and of course the area where you lived played a part, as did the family profile. The social worker helped us to make the decision which suited our family profile and so with much deliberation and prayerful consideration we chose to be short-term carers of babies.

As we went through the process, we felt more and more assured that it was a journey we wished to pursue. Of course,

there were anxieties but this was perfectly understandable and the social worker assigned to us did much to allay these anxieties.

After the process had finished, we waited for the next stage which was gaining approval to go forward with a view to having a child placed with us. This was a time of prayer and reflection. Our belief as a family has and always will be that the Lord will only open the doors he wishes you to go through and if you have faith to believe this, you cannot go wrong.

So our first placement – all these years later I can still remember this little boy who came to us in his little blue blanket

with a face of wonder as to who we were. The excitement for our family was never overshadowed by doubt and so we very quickly settled into life with this little one and watched as he grew and developed just like all the other babies we knew. As we

had opted to be short-time carers, we knew we would perhaps have him for a few months which is exactly the way it played out. In those months we grew to love and nurture him and he was most certainly part of our family.

Now all those years have passed and in that time a total of 33 babies have passed through our household. Every one of them different and from very different circumstances. Some came for a short time whilst others came for many months. The joy for us was seeing them develop into contented little people as part of our family. As they left us, it was never easy to let them go, but we knew the Lord had a plan for each of them and the job he had called us to do was complete.

Our family has been greatly enriched by our fostering experience and with the support from our social worker and our church, alongside our faith, we will continue to welcome these little ones into our home.

Our favourite Bible verse is Hebrews 13:2: “Do not neglect hospitality because through it some have entertained angels unaware.”

**Name has been changed to preserve anonymity.*

Tusla, the state body working with vulnerable families in the Republic of Ireland, is looking for foster carers. To find out more information, or to get in touch phone 1 800 226 771 or go to fostering.ie

Uncertain times

Dr William Henry



These are deeply uncertain times. Each occasion we turn to the news we are reminded of the seriousness of the events unfolding around us. As the Covid-19 pandemic continues daily to grow in severity, we sense fear is growing. That anxiety can deepen each time we hear of new developments and more temporary closures. So, as we hear that cinemas and theatres are shutting down, restaurants and bars are not opening, and libraries and even churches are closed – it all adds to that fear. It is, of course, normal to experience anxiety.

But the purpose of these closures is not to make us fearful, it is to make us feel safe. These are proactive steps that all work together in an effort to work against the spread of the virus, to aid the most vulnerable among us. All these closures should create a sense of protection.

However, what seems to happen when we hear each of these closures being announced, is that the cumulative effect is actually the opposite and it adds to our sense of fear. Our society is so accustomed to being self-reliant, but when it learns that supermarkets have empty shelves then we feel we have reached uncharted territory.

Into this situation the timeless words of Jesus are powerful... “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?”

“But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own” (Matthew 6:25-27; 33-34).

As troubling and testing as these days are, we have an opportunity to express a confidence in a God who offers hope in the most difficult of times. Our God is the one who never fails to deliver! Perhaps these are the very days when the world around us can see the difference being a Christian makes. No one would have desired that this crisis would engulf us, but we are where we are and we will follow the government’s guidance as good citizens. We are a community who are not defined by

fear but by faith and confidence in a loving Saviour and it is time for the church to be seen as the church of Jesus Christ.

We cannot minimise or underestimate the mental health impact of the increasing isolation reacting to this virus will cause and we must do all we can in Jesus’ name to combat this social ill. We will need to use our smartphones. Remember they

can actually be used to speak to people! Be creative and get a list of friends and neighbours and work your way through that list bringing a cheerful “hello” and some needed support.

All through this year, I have been encouraging our people to understand my theme, ‘Enjoying God’, as an opportunity to demonstrate practical faith in action, letting the world see the fruit of the Spirit through our daily living. Even today in simple ways we can evidence the gospel.

We can call elderly neighbours to check

on their welfare, offer to drop off supplies with those who need to self-isolate or look after the kids of those who are key healthcare workers.

Remember that even if churches are not meeting in physical buildings, you can still connect with other believers by watching an online service. The church is still the church and we need to maintain our identity and enthusiasm as followers of Jesus in other ways e.g. maintaining a church bulletin and delivering DVDs for those who are not into computers. You may have time to read a Christian book, sign up to Tides (PCI’s daily devotional) or begin a new Bible study, so as with everything, use your time well.

These will also be days of opportunity for the gospel, as we are living through unparalleled moments in modern history. Everyone will have thoughts and questions that are not easily answered. Those who were most self-confident may well be shaken and wonder where their anchor should be placed. So be intentional like never before in your evangelism.

Above all, let us uphold one another in prayer in this deeply challenging period, especially those who will be the most vulnerable and let us keep our eyes on Jesus.

Dr William Henry is Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.



Discerning the truth

Norman Hamilton encourages us not to believe everything we read or hear.

My mother used to say: “Well, I read it in black and white” – when discussing some news item in the local paper. The fact that it was printed and published ‘in black and white’ meant that the report was almost certainly reliable and should be taken as true.

If that was ever the case in the past, it certainly is not true today. Fake news is a very big problem, where something is said to be true, or presented as true, but is false, though quite deliberately put into the public arena as being reliable. Photos can also be altered, and videos produced which feature people who have played no part in the making of them. And there is a relatively new phenomenon of recipes being published that do not work, because the chemistry of the ingredients will not allow it. (For those who are curious... one suggestion has been to leave an egg in vinegar, and lo and behold, the egg will have become bigger than before!)

While that ‘recipe’ is simply bizarre, some of the things that are fake are quite dangerous. For example, it is not unusual for statements to be made about someone that are both untrue and malicious, and might even put their personal safety at risk. Sometimes these will lead to a court case, but often will not, for the risks and costs involved are usually very high.

There is a whole family of ‘fakery’ in words, never mind in pictures. Lies, deceit, half-truths, spin, fraud, misrepresentation to name but a few. And, of course, there is the juiciness of gossip, which is conversation that is not based on telling the truth. The apostle Paul was very specific about just how evil it is, given that too many people delight in it (see 2 Corinthians 12:20 and Romans 1:29).

This means that there is a very specific responsibility on those of us who are followers of Jesus Christ to be especially careful and very discerning about what we take on board as being true. It is extremely easy to have our opinions and views shaped mainly by what we hear on TV, read in the papers, or what is trending on social media, for there are often loud people and well-funded groups promoting opposite views on almost anything that matters. Brexit will benefit us/will not benefit us. There is a climate emergency/there is no climate emergency. Same-sex marriage is good/same-sex marriage is not good. Most of those aged 75 or over should pay the BBC licence fee/should not pay the licence fee... The list of arguments and disagreements is endless.

Debate and discussion are of course both very important and very necessary. However, to do them well requires us to think well. That does not mean we have to be highly educated. It does mean however, that we will not jump to conclusions, or adopt views simply because they are put to us in a persuasive way, or that they back up our own preferences – or prejudices. It is not a sin to change one’s mind, or be persuaded that the views we may have held for a long time need to be amended. Personally speaking, I no longer believe that the National Health Service should provide everything that everyone wants free of charge. I no longer believe that it is good for our society in Northern Ireland to have so many different types of schools. I have changed my mind progressively over the years as to what effective God-honouring evangelism looks like. And my

view as to how the church of Jesus Christ and the state relate to each other is also being revised as we become a much more secularised society.

In a word, I am trying, in my own very limited way, to take encouragement from the men of Issachar who, as we are told in 1 Chronicles, understood the times they

were in and what God’s people should do. This is far from easy, not least because there are so many competing views, pressures and expectations coming in on me – and you! It is simply naive to work on the assumption that what was appropriate in past times is, by definition, still the best in our ever-changing society. Yet, with that said, it is certainly true that we must be acutely aware of the ongoing work of Satan who is, after all, the “father of lies” (John 8.44). That truth matters, not least because these words spoken by Jesus have been written down in ‘black and white’ to warn us that ‘fakery’ and deceit will be ever with us. Ignoring that warning puts the health of both mind and soul in great peril.

...these words spoken by Jesus...warn us that ‘fakery’ and deceit will be ever with us.

Rev Dr Norman Hamilton

Very Rev Dr Norman Hamilton is a former Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.





Rick Hill recommends the PCI Intern Scheme to young leaders keen to serve, learn and grow in their faith.

The PCI Intern Scheme provides a brilliant opportunity for young leaders to serve in a different context over the course of a year, while receiving training and ongoing support to equip them for ministry along the way.

As I have been involved in the scheme over the last five years, it has been a privilege to get a close-up view of many young adults developing in their faith and discovering more of their gifts. Congregations understand that they aren't receiving a finely-tuned leader and so placements become an important training ground, however, fruit can often be seen from the simple seeds sown through an intern's service.

In many ways, the whole year is an opportunity to shape and prepare young leaders for whatever God has for them in the future. For some, this is the first tentative step towards a lifetime of vocational ministry, with many going on to become youth or children's workers,

or explore further theological study. For others, an intern year gives them the chance to serve the church for a year before embarking on their chosen career. Regardless, our hope is that they are each better equipped as leaders in their church and more robust in their faith to serve God in the world.

In whatever capacity, the PCI Intern Scheme provides an opportunity for a young adult to grow their confidence and develop their competence. There are so many young leaders who have benefited from our scheme, but the following are just some examples. If you know of anyone who might benefit from serving like this, or you would appreciate this

...the whole year is an opportunity to shape and prepare young leaders for whatever God has for them in the future.

opportunity yourself, then more details are available at www.presbyterianireland.org/pciintern with the closing date for this year's applications on 27 April.

Lily McCullough

Lily is a member of Killinchy Presbyterian Church and for a year served with Shore Street Presbyterian in Donaghadee.

"Throughout my year as an intern, no two weeks were the same – from Sunday school to surf trips, worship and water fights. I got to know children and young people of all ages, and from various backgrounds – church and unchurched. I was so grateful to also have the opportunity to move out for the year, supported by the church I served in. My highlight was being part of the town's Youth for Christ team, running Scripture Union (SU) in the local primary school and spending Friday evenings with young people from the local community, having



conversations about Jesus.

“The best part was getting to know church members, young and old, and building relationships that will last a lifetime. It was so helpful to have older church members helping disciple me as I tried to disciple young people. One way I was able to do this was through trialling a mentoring programme with four teenage girls, which meant opening the Bible over hot chocolate and exploring big questions we had. Throughout my year I developed skills I didn’t even know I had, particularly in delivering talks in youth fellowship and prayer ministry, which I found a real passion for. My leadership skills were challenged as I organised and led the church’s first trip to Summer Madness which was the perfect way to end an amazing year of learning.

“My year as an intern has shaped how I now help with youth ministry in my own congregation, recognising the importance of being spiritually fed before you pour out into others. It was also fascinating to see how another congregation works. Their approach to outreach and the local community made me realise the heart I have for neighbours who don’t yet know Jesus. Best of all, instead of just one church family I now have two!”

Phil McQuade

Phil served as an intern in Drogheda Presbyterian and is now a youth worker in Shore Street Presbyterian in Donaghadee.

“Looking ahead into my intern year, all I had expected to happen was to help out with the youth ministry of a church I had never met before. What actually happened was that I made friends for life, learned a lot about myself and discovered God calling me into youth ministry.

“At 18 years old I discovered that I was capable of leading a team to develop their

My year was incredibly formative, challenging and enjoyable. It...taught me the joys and the challenges of ministry...

youth ministry. What I enjoyed most was being thrown in at the deep end and discovering God could use me no matter what age I was. I was learning in life and learning about who I was in Christ.

“My intern year taught me the importance of daily Bible reading and how a leader is only as good as their relationship with God. To end my year, I was blessed to travel to Kenya where I witnessed the impact of the Great



Commission. To meet brothers and sisters in Christ across the world is unforgettable. To anyone thinking about this intern scheme, please give prayerful consideration as it will be a year you will not forget.”

Carol Graham

Carol is from Kilkeel Presbyterian Church and for a year has served in Great Victoria Street Presbyterian and Friendship House.

“This year I have been interning with Great Victoria Street Presbyterian and Friendship House, located in Sandy Row, south Belfast. There have been so many different programmes to get involved with, interacting with a whole range of ages. God has given me so many opportunities throughout this year to develop in my skills and gain confidence in working with children and young people, building relationships within church and having the opportunity to serve him there.

“It has been amazing to be part of God’s work being done in Friendship House, where we spend time with younger primary school kids, sharing

stories from the Bible and with older kids, spending one-on-one time working on homework and showing them God’s love through our actions. I have learnt so much from the staff I serve alongside, who have encouraged me in my faith and given me opportunities to keep stepping out of my comfort zone. It has been a great year to experience this type of missional work, grow in my faith and learn to trust God in everything.”

Steph Houston

Steph served as an intern in Wellington Presbyterian and is now the children’s worker in High Kirk Presbyterian in Ballymena.

“I can’t think about my year as an intern without a massive smile on my face! The year completely pushed me out of my comfort zone as I got involved in a range of activities such as schools’ ministry, youth club and youth fellowship. Each week allowed me to grow in different ways. My line manager was always there to help, challenge and encourage me in whatever it was that I was doing, which really helped me to grow in my discipleship and leadership.

“The highlight was mentoring two girls and watching how they developed in their own faith and understanding of who God is over the year. Watching them go from being shy to sharing their thoughts on what God was teaching them was amazing.



“My year was incredibly formative, challenging and enjoyable. It allowed me to see where God was leading me and taught me the joys and the challenges of ministry, which is so important to me now as I serve in full-time children’s ministry. Not only did my year as an intern give me skills that help me each day in my ministry, but it also gave me friendships that are still so valuable to me.”

Rick Hill is PCI’s Discipleship Development Officer.

Life lessons

Sophie de Witt

Author and speaker at Presbyterian Women's annual conference



I grew up in a loving, privileged, nominally Anglican home in Cornwall but didn't come across 'born again' Christianity until I went to university. Then it was a two-year journey of debating, researching, wrestling and then finally repentance in my third year. My plan was to get involved in Third World urban development but somewhere along the way, the Lord changed my plans and I ended up in student work at a big church in London. It was there I met South African Chris de Witt. In 2003 we married and at the end of 2004 moved to Cape Town. We have three children (Molly 12, Zach 10 and Joseph 8. We adopted Jo when he was 11 months old). Chris leads a church plant and we started up a Christian primary school in a suburb of Cape Town called Pinelands.

One-to-one discipleship is so effective in accelerating someone's growth in Christ, if the Spirit is truly at work in them. There is such freedom for individualised teaching, application and prayer. And not only is it incredibly helpful for the younger Christian (or unbeliever), but also for the one leading/facilitating the meetings, whereby through the preparation time in prayer and Bible study and also the time meeting up together, their own walk with the Lord is nourished.



Being a mum has given me higher 'highs' and lower 'lows' than anything else in life! The strength of affection one feels for one's children can almost burst your heart with joy. But there are many times when parenting has made me feel more anxious, exasperated, exhausted, fearful, sad and angry than any other trigger.

The two times in my life when I felt closest to God were probably when my hopes and dreams were most soundly smashed. When I had a broken engagement, before I met Chris, and then when I found out at my 13-week scan (age 33) that our first baby had died a few weeks before. Both times, I had been thrilled and in the middle of planning and dreaming and God took these dreams away in a moment. And yet, in the depth of the pain and loss, I wrestled with him in a profound way and he assured me of his goodness and sovereignty and I clung on to these truths desperately and walked very closely with the Lord hour by hour.

In some ways, my privileged upbringing (being white, relatively wealthy, happy family, nice

home, good education, fun activities/holidays etc.) has led me to be more entitled and fussy than I would like to be. That's not my parents' fault at all, but rather my sinful nature, but also a natural consequence of privilege, to a large degree. My parents have always been welcoming of everyone and so I think that helped me to have a more accepting attitude of different people than I otherwise would have done.

The most difficult thing about being a Christian is being obedient to God's Word and not justifying my selfishness.

My favourite hymn is *Be Thou My Vision*. It's the final hymn we sang at our wedding. I especially like it when played with strong Irish drums! The words stir me to centre my all on Christ, and treasure him above all earthly things.

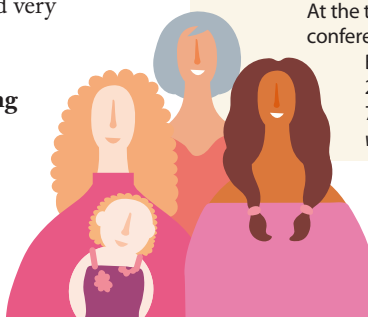
My idea of relaxation often depends on how much energy I have at the time. If it's low, perhaps relaxing with family or good friends, or watching an episode of something with the family, or my husband and I having takeaway supper. If I have some reserves, then going for an outing or a walk somewhere around our beautiful city, especially along with some friends, or perhaps playing board games if the weather is bad.

The thing I love most about the church is struggling together to love and serve our Lord; being in the fight together through prayer, encouragement, rebuke, fun, worship, eating and so on.

The best present I have received was when my daughter gave me a jar of 'vouchers' last year – for massages, a coffee/milkshake out with her, a family meal cooked by her, and so on. It also had some encouraging verses. The heart that was behind this gift was so beautiful.

The hardest lesson I have had to learn is that my timing isn't necessarily God's timing – and in fact, my plans aren't necessarily his at all!

At the time of printing, the Presbyterian Women's annual conference was planned for Thursday 7 May in Assembly Buildings, Belfast – the annual meeting from 2pm-3.45pm and the evening celebration from 7.30pm-9pm. For more information go to www.presbyterianireland.org/pw





Wisdom and sacrifice

Andrew Conway

Sacrifice doesn't sound particularly appealing, does it? If you want to lose someone's attention quickly and make them unwilling go along with what you're saying, a phrase such as 'sacrifices will have to be made' is often quite effective!

Yet I can't help but think that it's not quite accurate to say that we aren't willing to make sacrifices. The question is often more in terms of what we're willing to make sacrifices for, rather than whether or not we're willing to make sacrifices at all. Don't many of us regularly make sacrifices for all sorts of things? Pleasant foods are set aside to pursue fitness, for the sake of sport or simply general health. Social engagements are declined in order to study or work.

It's not possible for us to do everything that might be good or desirable, so some things must make way for others. To some extent wisdom (which, as we reminded ourselves last month, begins with reverence for God) might justly be thought of as the ability to know what should be pursued and what should be sacrificed.

When it comes to church, there can be no doubt that some make great sacrifices for church and others sacrifice church for very little. Some give up countless amounts of time, money and energy to serve in their own congregation and beyond. Others are willing to give up on church for the sake of little more than taking it easy. Of course, it's not automatically the case that great sacrifices for the church are the will of God. If I give up so much time and energy for the church that I've none left for my wife and children, I have clearly defied express statements of Scripture. Doubtless we could all profitably examine ourselves on the subject of sacrifice as a helpful guide to whether we are truly living as wise people or not.

Yet before ever we take moral lessons from this truth, we should first look at how God has demonstrated his wisdom in sacrifice. In a well-known statement to the Corinthian Christians, Paul affirms that 'Christ crucified' is 'the wisdom of God' (1 Corinthians 1:23-24). How so? If we glance back into the Old Testament, we can notice that two great themes emerge when it comes to how God treats sinners. On the one hand, it is abundantly clear that he hates sin and punishes it fittingly. On the other hand, it is at least equally manifest that he delights to

forgive sinners and shower them with mercy and compassion. Sometimes these two themes are found next to one another, for example in Exodus 34:7, in which God himself says that he forgives wickedness, rebellion and sin, yet does not leave the guilty unpunished.

At first glance, it is not immediately obvious how both of these things can be true. How can God forgive sinners yet punish sin? The discerning reader of the Old Testament will surely form the impression that the answer is related to the priesthood and the sacrifice system. Yet only in the New Testament, with the coming of the great High Priest who offered up himself as a sacrifice, is the answer made truly clear. At the cross God demonstrated his wisdom by punishing sin and providing for the forgiveness of sinners who repent and believe – all in one act.

The wonder is that the God who is wise enough to know how to both punish sin and forgive sinners considered such a sacrifice to be worth making! "For the joy set before him" – the joy of glorifying his Father in the rescuing of sinners – Jesus endured the cross (Hebrews 12:2). One who is boundless in wisdom saw fit to demonstrate his wisdom in the costly rescue of wrath-deserving creatures like you and me. What a breathtaking wonder!

I suppose it's safe to say that our willingness to sacrifice for something reflects our sense of its value (whether that sense is accurate and reasonable or otherwise). I would happily sacrifice time and money to buy some new tools, but I find myself much more reluctant to sacrifice time and money for things my wife wants to buy!

How willing are we to make sacrifices for God? How willing are we to offer our very selves to him as living sacrifices? Doesn't he deserve it? Can't he be trusted to order our priorities fittingly? Won't one who has given so much for us prove reliable and good in his plans for us? Christ crucified is the wisdom of God. Let's deny ourselves, take up the cross, and follow him.

Rev Andrew Conway is minister of Clonduff and Hilltown Presbyterian churches.

How willing are we to offer our very selves to him as living sacrifices?

CONGREGATIONAL STORY



Photography by Jamie Trimble

Suzanne Hamilton explores how a Co Wicklow congregation has come to the aid of a local club for people with an intellectual disability.

Eccelesiastes 3:11 says: “He has made everything beautiful in its time...” This sums up perfectly how God’s goodness and perfect timing saw Bray Presbyterian Church members reach out to a local special needs club in their hour of need.

For the past 30 years, Lakers Recreational and Social Club has been providing activities for children and adults with an intellectual disability in the County Wicklow town of Bray, with the aim of developing and nurturing personal skills and self-esteem.

Such has been its success, that it has grown from humble beginnings of a few concerned parents coming together upon realising that there were no social activities for their children, to a large club with many volunteers and around 360 members, aged from five to 78, who can access a wide range of pastimes – from cooking to Boxercise, art classes to tug of war.

Explaining the importance of such a facility, Lakers’ manager Helen Furlong says, “Some participate weekly, others not



Andrew Gill, Helen Furlong and Trevor Bailey

so much, but it’s all about being part of a club... As a person with a disability, you go to your day service and you do x, y and z activities and you see the same people, Monday to Friday. There might be six people in your group, there might be 10. When you come to Lakers you meet all the other different day services and you make new friends, and your family makes new friends. It’s new experiences and it’s

Historically we’ve had this resource and it’s great to be able to put this to good use.

your choice to come.”

The charity’s fantastic work was put in jeopardy on Thursday 4 October 2018 though, as fire ripped through the industrial unit that housed Lakers, destroying everything.

Helen still remembers the day she received the call about the fire. At first, she thought it would be small, but when she arrived at the premises, she was greeted by complete devastation. Particularly galling was the destruction of a new bus which had been given to Lakers just two months previously by fundraisers. “They raised 20,000 euro for it, and it was sitting in the garage and the reg plate was just melted. It just haunts me...it was horrible.”

Lakers is highly thought of in the Bray area, and the local community immediately rallied round, with offers of help and temporary accommodation. There were even donations of two new buses, so the club could continue to provide its vital transport service.

Among those to come to Lakers’ aid was Bray Presbyterian Church. Four



days earlier, the keys to a former national school building the congregation owns were handed back after the tenant – a secondary school – moved out after 25 years.

Trevor Bailey, from the church, was tasked with looking after the building and the keys. He heard of the Lakers' plight on the way back from a business trip in Edinburgh. "I was sitting on a plane on the Friday evening and I looked on my phone and realised there was this fire in Bray. I looked closer and saw it was the Lakers. I just thought that we have a big school here and someone has a need," he explains.

He contacted the Lakers management by email on Saturday, and on the Sunday he nipped out of the church's morning service to meet representatives. "We had to work out a very simple lease, but that was worked out within the next few days. In about a week of the fire they had the keys for here, and it's gone from there," he adds.

Rev Andrew Gill, who was installed as minister of Bray in September, is enthusiastic about the connection with Lakers and says, "It's great how we can serve the community. Historically we've had this resource and it's great to be able to put this to good use."

The Lakers have certainly hit the ground running in their new facility. Helen says it is a big improvement on their previous

I can't tell you how grateful we are to the Presbyterian community.

building. An old abattoir, it was situated down a steep laneway, was surrounded by derelict buildings and didn't have any windows. In contrast Bray Presbyterian Church's premises are bright and centrally located so many club members can experience a degree of independence by now taking the bus or DART to Lakers.

"This place is cosier, it's friendlier, it's more accessible. Members are coming down earlier now and they'll just sit and chat and talk to their friends," says Helen, who points out that previously members would be depending on lifts to access the club. The charity has also worked hard at turning the space into their own. In only 18 months, they have taken down walls and made new rooms.

Fergus Finlay, chairman of Lakers, says, "We've invested everything we have in it. We got really lucky. We found a fantastic builder and we found a wonderful project manager who gave us as much time as they could and charged as little as they could. You know how difficult it is to get a builder and a plumber and an electrician and a carpenter, but we had them here swarming all over the place, and we were ready to move in before we knew where we were."

One of the latest additions is a sensory garden, which was created after a team of 250 people descended on the Bray site as part of Difference Days – an alternative company day out, where staff of an organisation give their labour for one day to benefit others.

In an amazing transformation over the relatively compact site, the outside space was transformed from scrubland into a



Fergus Finlay

peaceful garden area, which Lakers can use for its gardening programme. "It's a little oasis," says Helen, who adds that it is an outlet for those members who aren't necessarily creative or sporty. "If a member comes in with a specific interest, we do our best to do that."

What has touched the Lakers team most over the past few difficult years has been the support of the community and the church. Along with the donation of new buses within days of the fire, numerous fundraising events – which are still ongoing – have raised the much-needed cash to keep the facility operating along with its extensive programme of activities and popular summer schemes.

Among the innovative fundraisers was a 24-hour CPR event run by a local lifesaving club and a flea market – a first for Lakers. Commenting on the number of fundraisers organised, Helen says, "There wasn't enough bodies or days to attend all the events."

Fergus is especially grateful to the church and says, "On behalf of the board of Lakers, I can't tell you how grateful we are to the Presbyterian community. I mean, it's probably the smallest community in faith terms in Bray, but it has an incredible perspective and incredible reach out... There's no community has made a bigger contribution to the wider community than this. This is absolutely amazing,"



HE IS RISEN!

David Clarke offers an Easter reflection, reminding us that not only has Jesus risen, but he goes before us in all we do and his promises are true.

"Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his

disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you'" (Mark 16:6-7).

Dr Billy Graham once recounted how an Austrian village was miraculously delivered from the army of

Napoleon Bonaparte.

In 1813, Napoleon had invaded Austria, and advanced within six miles of the village of Feldkirch. The Austrian army was some miles away and it seemed as if the village would be occupied

without resistance. But as Napoleon's army advanced by night, the Christians of Feldkirch gathered in their little church to pray for the safety of their village. It was Easter Eve.

Next morning at sunrise, the bells of the village church pealed out across the countryside, to hail Christ's resurrection. Napoleon's officers, who worshipped Robespierre's Supreme Being, if they worshipped at all, did not realise it was Easter Day. The ringing bells led them to believe the Austrian army had come to occupy the village. In their mistaken belief, they ordered a retreat, and the village was saved.

Easter bells ring out a unanimous message – one shared by every Christian grouping of whatever stripe – the message that Christ is risen. It is a message that puts our fears to flight.

A great man once wrote, "The gospels do not explain the resurrection; the resurrection explains the gospels." Consider the two clauses: 'the gospels do not explain the resurrection'. The gospel writers produced no timeline of what happened that Easter morning, or how the heavy stone was rolled away, or what physiological changes took place in Jesus' body. They boldly proclaimed that Jesus was risen, and called men and women to repent and believe.

The second clause is equally important: 'the resurrection explains the gospels'. Apart from the resurrection, the disciples would have skulked back shamefaced to Galilee. They would have had their memories, but they would have had no message to proclaim. Apart from the resurrection, Jesus of Nazareth would have been only dimly known, another would-be Jewish Messiah, forgotten like all the rest. Apart from the resurrection there would have been no church, no written gospel record, no worldwide mission telling of a Saviour who had conquered sin and death and the grave.

Mark's gospel tells how devoted women, on their errand of love and mercy that Easter morn, find the stone gone, the tomb empty, and a young man in a white robe sitting inside. Naturally, they are alarmed, but he tells them, "Don't be alarmed". The word in the Greek is rare and strong, and could be translated as 'shuddering awe'. And to this awestruck pair he gives glorious news, striking three exultant notes:

Easter bells ring out a unanimous message... that Christ is risen.

He is risen

Each word is significant. 'He' – Jesus himself, not some fond memory or some mystic spirit. 'Is' – in the present, not in some distant day of general resurrection. 'Risen' – with all the word implies of power and victory. And to substantiate the young man's message, he says, "See the place where they put him" (v6).

That confident declaration disposes of a raft of theories to explain the empty tomb. The idea that the women were mistaken, or that the body had been stolen by friends or foes are all waved aside.

In a way we cannot understand or explain, the body of Jesus had been moved. The New English Bible rightly renders the passive mood of the verb: "He has been raised". Resurrection was God's act, his seal of approval on the obedient life and sacrificial death of Jesus. At different stages of Jesus' ministry, God's approval was demonstrated. The resurrection is God's final seal on all Christ did for the sins of the world.

He goes before us

"He is going to Galilee ahead of you" (v7). Hebrews 6:20 describes Jesus as 'our forerunner', our pioneer. The idea is of the reconnaissance corps of an army; the advance party that goes ahead to ensure that it is safe for the rest to follow. Jesus, says the writer to the Hebrews, has gone into the presence of God to make it safe for all of us to follow. Indeed, he goes ahead of us into all of life!

The women discovered that truth on the first Easter Day. They had gone prepared to embalm the body, even though they knew they could not possibly remove the stone sealing the tomb – but when they arrived they found that God had already removed the stone. He was there before them.

Early in the church's history a group

Fear, which has large eyes, dreads the future, but faith moves confidently forward...

of believers met to pray for the release of the imprisoned Peter. An angel appeared to Peter, telling him to get up, put on his clothes and sandals and follow him. They made marvellous progress but were finally confronted by the iron gate on the prison perimeter. As they approached it, the gate swung open of its own accord, and Peter was at liberty (Acts 12:10). God had gone before, preparing the way.

When Bunyan's pilgrim was nearing the Palace Beautiful, he was dismayed to see two lions guarding the entrance. Their roaring nearly made him turn back, but Watchful, the porter, told him to go forward boldly, keeping in the middle of the path. When he did so, and got right up to the lions, he found that they were firmly chained, and could not reach him.

We often worry beforehand about some interview, some new responsibility, some operation; but discover that when the event takes place we have been carried through in the most amazing way. Fear, which has large eyes, dreads the future, but faith moves confidently forward, convinced of what the theologians call 'prevenient grace', the grace that goes before us. As the renowned spiritual counsellor Baron von Hügel put it: "God is always previous."

His promises are true

"He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you" (v7). The young man is reminding the disciples of a promise made in the upper room (John 14:28): "After I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee."

During his exploits in Africa, David Livingstone once found himself in a particularly tricky corner. He recalled Christ's promise, "Lo, I am with you always" (Matthew 28:20), and set it down in his diary as 'the word of a gentleman of the most sacred and strictest honour'.

Stephen of Mar Saba's famous hymn, *Art Thou Weary, Art Thou Languid?* recalls the gospel promise, "Whoever comes to me I will never drive away" (John 6:37). The author asks, "If I ask him to receive me, will he say me nay?", and supplies the robust answer, "Not till earth and not till heaven pass away."

He keeps his promises, and is solicitous even for the Peter who denied him.

Very Rev Dr David Clarke is a former PCI Moderator.



A steep *learning curve*

Pip Florit tells the story of Rev Dr Maqsood Kamil, who has been supported through his difficult PhD process by PCI and its Leaders in Training scheme.

No one who has completed a PhD would ever tell you that it was easy. After at least three years of gruelling research, presentations, writing and endless editing, if you earn the title 'Dr', you deserve it.

The Council for Global Mission, through the United Appeal-funded Leaders in Training (LITs) scheme, has had the privilege of providing partial scholarships for PhD candidates from amongst PCI's global partners. One of the most recent graduates is Rev Dr Maqsood Kamil, vice-principal at Gujranwala Theological Seminary in Pakistan. Maqsood completed his PhD in historical theology and Christian-Muslim relations through the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies



(OCMS). He will graduate in summer 2020, following the completion of his PhD in August 2019.

The road to that point was not a straightforward one.

Maqsood moved to Oxford with his wife and three children in September 2013 to begin his studies.

While life in Oxford was very different from life in Pakistan, Maqsood had no

Maqsood has expressed great gratitude for PCI and its support throughout his period of study...



TRANSFORMING
MISSION through
RESEARCH and
SCHOLARSHIP

doubt that it was where he was meant to be. "God brought me to Oxford and provided everything that was needed," he said.

He found a close spiritual community, both in OCMS and in the church that he and his family attended.

The scholarly environment provided exceptional

intellectual resources and outstanding libraries that allowed him to progress his studies. Most days, he had the opportunity to spend time praying with one of his professors, a time that was significant in his spiritual growth.

Despite this positive environment, studying and living far from home were stressful. While Maqsood was grateful to have his family with him in Oxford,

his time with them was limited as he had to spend many hours in the library. While in Oxford, both his father and mother took ill in Pakistan. It was incredibly difficult for him to be away when they passed away and he has expressed gratitude to PCI for its prayers and practical support through that time.

In 2016, while he was moving towards the final stages of his PhD, Maqsood applied to renew his visa to allow the continuation of his studies. Unexpectedly, his application was refused and, despite appeals, he and his family were forced to return to Pakistan before he could complete his studies. The situation meant that he had to resume work at the seminary and, for many months, his thesis was put on hold.

Eventually, he was able to resume his study on a part-time distance-learning basis. This was one of the most trying times of his PhD – his stress levels were high, facilities for study were limited, he had restricted access to his professors and his situation in Pakistan did not make it easy to study. His youngest daughter struggled to adjust back into the school system in Pakistan and took a long time to settle. However, the constant prayers and encouragement of his supervisors, OCMS community and PCI encouraged the family to press on through the challenges.

After a long slog, Maqsood made it – in June 2019, he was able to submit his thesis, an 80,000-word document. One of the greatest academic struggles had been to reduce the thesis from over 200,000 words! His viva voce was organised for August, at which time he would need to return to Oxford. If you're not familiar with the PhD process, once you submit your thesis, two examiners read and assess it. Then comes the viva voce – a gruelling



Oxford Centre for Mission Studies (OCMS)

oral defence of the thesis, during which the examiners can ask about anything contained in the several thousand words. It's difficult, stressful and exhausting and gave Maqsood the final test of his PhD.

Maqsood had travelled from Pakistan to Oxford and was understandably nervous in the lead-up to the viva. He had spent several weeks preparing, including reading his whole thesis

Despite the difficulty, God provided all that Maqsood needed.

several times. On the appointed day, he was ready to face the challenge and was present in the examination room. However, 30 minutes before the scheduled examination time, Maqsood received the news of a communication error that had resulted in the absence of his lead examiner, who had not been able to read the thesis. He was naturally very disappointed, but after the initial shock, he accepted what had happened and began to look to the next step. The viva was rescheduled for two weeks later, meaning that Maqsood had to reorganise travel and accommodation and wait patiently.

"However, on the day of the viva, it was just so wonderful and enjoyable,"

Maqsood said. The examiners were full of praise, commenting that it was one of the best theses they had ever read! At the end of a long journey, it was more than Maqsood had hoped for. Despite the difficulty, God provided all that Maqsood needed.

Maqsood and his family are back in Pakistan, continuing to live and work in a challenging context. Maqsood continues to teach at the theological

seminary, investing in the lives of young men and women. As well as his positions as professor of theology and vice principal, he has been working hard to help the students build up their faith, introducing weekly prayer and fasting, along with an English worship service.

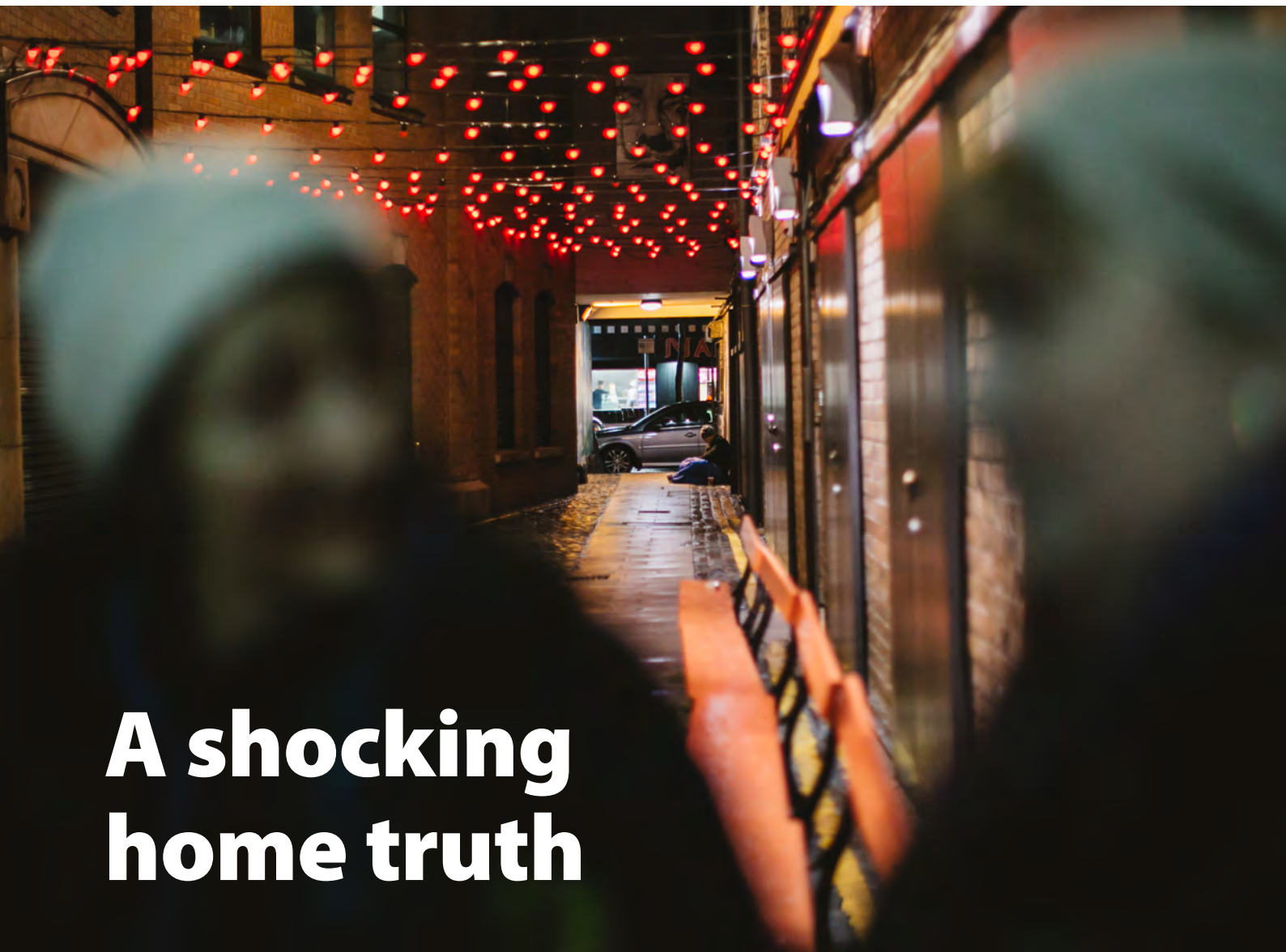
His wife, a science teacher, could not work for a year and a half after they returned from the UK. However, in January 2018, she rejoined her previous school where she is teaching science to junior students. Having seen the difficulties her own daughter faced as a child in the minority, she started gathering students at her house weekly. She provides them with a safe and comfortable environment and encourages them to study and not give up in a hostile environment.

Maqsood's thesis has proved very important in the minority context where a small group of believers is continuing to serve God. He hopes to publish his thesis as a book, which he believes will be a blessing to the global church. Maqsood has expressed great gratitude for PCI and its support throughout his period of study and he continues to remember Ireland in his prayers.

Pip Florit is a Mission Support Officer for PCI.

It is through generous giving that the United Appeal for Mission is able to fund the Leaders in Training (LITs) scheme, which provides partial scholarships for PhD candidates from amongst PCI's global partners.





A shocking home truth

Kevin Hargaden addresses the truth about the issue of homelessness in Ireland, and introduces a new resource designed to help churches tackle the problem.

I spoke recently with a woman who has been homeless for four years. She was running a successful little restaurant when she was the victim of fraud. Although she was victorious in a legal battle, the criminal had no funds available to compensate her. The loss of the initial crime and the costs that then incurred were greater than her income. The business closed. She could no longer pay rent. She went from thriving and contributing to the economy to homeless in a matter of months.

Her husband sought respite in drink and gambling and he is now gone from the home. He had become abusive before leaving her alone to care for their son who has severe asthma. They have lived in five different towns over the last four years as they are moved from short-

term accommodation, to hotel, to B&B, perpetually at the mercy of a bureaucracy that sees her tiny, struggling family as nothing but an entry in a database, a case file to be processed.

In her present accommodation, the hotel room is over an hour from her boy's school by bus. It is a room barely fit for human habitation, obviously neglected for many years by its owners who do not need to invest in their business, since the

...the current housing and homelessness crisis in Ireland is more severe than at any time since the Great Famine.

homelessness crisis basically grants them a blank cheque from the Department of Housing every month. She is not allowed to be inside her room from 8am in the morning until 5pm in the evening, so after dropping her child to school, she wanders the streets. There are certain fast food restaurants where she knows she'll be allowed to shelter for hours in exchange for buying a cup of coffee. In two of the residences she has been placed in, she was sexually harassed by staff members who know how vulnerable she is. When she called an ambulance in the middle of the night when her son suffered a particularly devastating asthma attack, she was threatened with eviction for breaking the curfew imposed in that particular hotel. After 11pm she was not meant to leave her room, you see.

By some metrics, the current housing and homelessness crisis in Ireland is more severe than at any time since the Great Famine. It is easy for the numbers and news reports to flow over you and to not grasp what they really mean.

To be without a home is more than a humiliation or a threat to your health, it is to be left without any kind of stability. Relationships are practically impossible to maintain. How hard it is to make friends when you are moved constantly from place to place! We do not yet know what harm is being done to children who have no desk on which to do their homework and who never see their parents cook a meal. This is a human tragedy that compels Christians to act.

More than 10,000 people are officially homeless in Ireland, but the true number is higher than that. Less than 10 years ago, when Ireland was in the midst of the worst of the global financial crash, there was rarely more than 600 homeless children in the Republic. Now that number is over 4,000. Average rents in Dublin approach €2,000 a month, but the rental bubble is so great that 66% of all homes available to let are now in 'rent pressure zones'. The crisis is not just in Galway, Cork, or Dublin. It afflicts miss-them-if-you-blink villages like Macroom in north County Cork.

The primary reason why people are homeless is not addiction or dysfunction, but a simple incapacity to pay rent. Things are similarly bad in Northern Ireland where more than 26,000 people already live in unsafe or unsuitable accommodation, including at least 6,000 children; and more than 12,500 people are officially homeless.

Over the last generation, across Ireland – both in the Republic and in Northern Ireland – we have seen the commitment to public housing shrivel while the investment markets around property have been given free rein. A consequence of this is a massive increase in value for those fortunate enough to have purchased their homes in the 1970s or 80s. While they struggled to pay their mortgage, their houses grew disproportionately in value as government policies encouraged land speculation. Having a valuable asset is a good thing. But when we allowed so much of our wealth to be made up by our houses, we did not think clearly about those who would be left behind. The fact

is we can either have a society where housing is arranged to grow in value, or we can have a society with housing that everyone can afford. We cannot have both.

There is a direct economic and political connection between our valuable houses and the plight of people like that woman who cried in desperation in my office.

It is a fundamental conviction of reformed Christianity that our faith should have a social impact. Presbyterians do not retreat from the problems of the world. Equipped by the Spirit, we know that it is our responsibility to care for our neighbour in need. Calvin preached the gospel with startling clarity at every opportunity, and he also insisted that housing regulations be strictly enforced in Geneva so that the floods of refugees welcomed into the city would have appropriate homes. Those

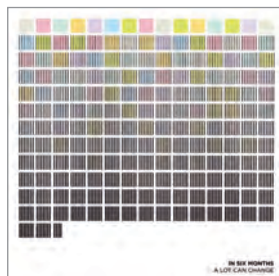
The myth that we cannot help has become stronger than the fact that we can....

are not two disconnected realms. If Jesus is Lord, then our discipleship to him must involve standing up when injustice prevails.

The quest for home is a fundamental theme that runs through the biblical narrative. Our Scriptures begin with an eviction and end with a homecoming and in between there are periods of exodus and exile. Christianity is unique in the entire world for insisting our God is homeless; on this earth, he had no place to lay his head. We of course believe that our ultimate home is with him in his Father's house (which has many rooms!) and that means that we live our lives as 'resident aliens'. But Peter advises in that very same text that we are to "live such good lives among the pagans that though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us" (1 Peter 2:11-12).

The woman whose story began this article has little hope of escaping her purgatory of homelessness. The myth that we cannot help has become stronger

than the fact that we can. The island of Ireland is wealthy. It is a grave injustice if we do not assure everyone who lives here a secure home. What's the point of all our toil if we leave fundamental needs unaddressed! We have the resources, we lack the will.



To help Christians understand this social problem through a biblical and theological lens, the Irish Council of Churches has prepared new small group Bible study materials. Intended to be used over a six-week period, these studies bring

together the finest sociological research with deep theological reflection, to help Christians work out for themselves how they should respond, in their place, to the crisis that afflicts so many. They can be accessed online at www.irishchurches.org/homeless/ and physical resources are available directly from the Council (028 9066 3145 (NI) / 048 9066 3145 (RoI), info@irishchurches.org). We often dream about a society that resonates more clearly with the values of the Bible. Providing a home for everyone is one tangible step in that direction.

Kevin Hargaden is an elder in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, and works as a social theologian for a branch of the Society of Jesus in Ireland.



Popular media and faith

Gareth Stewart



It seems as if the popular media is showing a fixation with Christianity at the moment. We are confronted with a new Daniel Radcliffe comedy, *Miracle Workers*, about God and earth. We also see the late Terry Pratchett's *Good Omens* about an angel and a demon working together to stop the end of the world. On Netflix we see *The Good Place*, about heaven, and *Lucifer*, about Satan living in Los Angeles. There is also the controversial depiction of Jesus in *The First Temptation of Christ*. What are we to make of all this interest?

Where once depictions of Christians were seen in a P.G. Wodehouse model of a bumbling vicar or well-meaning spinster aunt, Christians are becoming the source of the joke. *The Tracey Ullman Show* (season two) contains a scene with a Christian job interview. Everything goes to plan and the woman is about to be offered the job when she reveals she is a Christian. The silence and canned laughter shows that this makes her a joke. Christians are no longer seen as harmless; we are now seen as the brunt of the problem. Many have read with horror the alleged statement of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who has been claimed to state that evangelical Christians were the worst part of Canadian society. If such a statement had been made about any other religious minority, there would have been outcry. Yet in a liberal democracy, it would appear that Christians are an unwelcome annoyance at best and a direct enemy at worst.

There has always been some interest in all things Christian. Many of us slogged through Milton's *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* at school. There are also the Christian supernatural writings of Frank Peretti which were popular in the 1980s. Some may even say that mimicking is a form of flattery. The problem is that none of the contemporary popular manifestations reflect genuine Christian theology. This means that the view of Christianity which is askew is being presented to those who will never hear it corrected. This is an exceptionally worrying issue, because it can be assumed that what people are hearing is the truth.

There is also the issue of the deliberate misrepresentation of vital Christian truth and the person and character of Jesus. For Christians this is a most offensive practice. When our Saviour is a source of fun, biblical teaching warped into science fiction and fantasy, and our beliefs relegated to an amusement for entertainment, it tells us something is wrong. Let it be clear that God is not afraid of fun. We read in Scripture that God laughs (Psalm 2:4; 37:13; 59:8). What he does not laugh at are

people making fun of him. Nor should his people. The person of Jesus, the teaching of Scripture and our theology form the foundation of our eternal salvation. This is a serious matter and any belittling of Christianity for enjoyment is a perversion.

It would seem that behind the current crop of spiritual entertainment is a desire to disarm the authority of the gospel. When our beliefs are seen as humorous and our Saviour as just another man, we are seen as having nothing to say in the public square. We are perceived as well meaning, naive and not very intelligent followers, and at worst deceivers enslaving human freedom. Scripture tells us that Satan transforms himself into an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14). We can conclude, therefore, the true source behind the popular media today.

...any belittling of Christianity for enjoyment is a perversion.

How, then, ought believers to respond? We must never forget that money drives media. We must, therefore, choose not to watch, purchase or support such forms of entertainment. Instead we must demand that the Christian faith receives a genuine representation in drama, comedy, science fiction, fantasy, and the myriad of art

categories. We must also object. Granted that once these shows go to air there is very little that will pull them back. Yet media needs to hear our voice. This means that there is a need for shows which are artistically good and rigorous, but which present Christians and the gospel in a true representation. Christians need to be involved in the creative process and reflect the excellence of God in all their artistic endeavours.

No one deserves to have their world view belittled and their beliefs made a source of fun. What we must demand is respect and fair treatment. While there have been things said and done by the church which have been detrimental to society and people, Christians have also done great good. We think of individuals working in politics to make society fairer; in social work, providing help for the needy; in education, training the next generation of thinkers; in the arts, creating quality products which have stood the test of time. In a politically correct world, there is a need for Christians to be afforded the same honour and respect as all religions. This may be a costly battle, but for believers we are not ashamed to the power of Christ in the gospel (Romans 1:16). Many Christians put their lives on the line for their faith, we must stand up and be prepared to be unpopular, because Jesus matters too much to us to have him maligned.

Rev Gareth Stewart is minister of Maghera Presbyterian Church.

Mission *Connect*



Mission news from workers around Ireland and the world.



Every aspect of our Church's mission depends to some extent on United Appeal. Hundreds of projects and programmes at home and overseas are helping to advance God's kingdom, showing God's love in action to hundreds of thousands of people.

Laying solid foundations

Mark Annett

Competitive Bible quizzes and coffee shop outings

Norma Picking

Relying daily on God in Kenya

Gary and Mary Reid

From Russia with love

St Petersburg Christian University

Arousing the church to awaken the nation

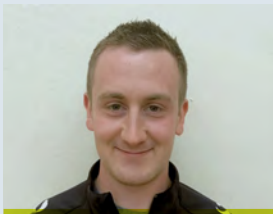
Sonya Anderson

A light in a dark place

Rev Rodney Thompson

Including April prayer diary

Laying solid foundations



Mark Annett

Community outreach worker, First Rathfriland Presbyterian Church

Since June 2019, I have had the privilege of working alongside Rev Trevor Boyd in First Rathfriland. Before then, most of my working life had been on building sites across the country, so when I came to be involved in First Rathfriland, I tried to take some of what I learned on those sites and use it in my new-found calling as the congregation's community outreach coordinator.

This may seem like a strange thing to say, but it is something I have found to be helpful, because I believe in laying foundations! That was much of my job before and it has been so much of my work since. We aren't so naive in life as to believe a house would stand without a sure foundation, and so we want to have the same for our mission and outreach – a solid foundation.

I have been leading the holiday Bible club in Rathfriland for the past three years, and during that time we have seen it go from strength the strength, seeing over 90 children attend in 2019 – up from just over 30 in 2016. More than numbers, it has also grown significantly and now includes a teenagers' event in the evenings, two Sunday services connected to the team, a church prayer meeting each day, and an outreach programme to one of the local estates.

The outreach to the local estate has also seen some great work being done. Over the course of the summer months, I led a team under a trusty gazebo on the grass, teaching some of the children in the estate from God's Word. Many of the children, and indeed

adults, are unchurched and so it was a real opportunity for us to be involved in. It was a great time of relationship building with both young and old, and some of the unchurched children also came along to our holiday Bible club to hear more from the Bible.

At the beginning of my time in Rathfriland, I suggested there should be an area in the hall for coffee or tea. It had been noted

that many of the parents leave their children to the various organisations and then sit waiting in their cars for their children to finish, so an outreach possibility was being missed. It has been great to see the Session of the church

working together in recent weeks to make this a reality.

We also hosted a team from Capernwray Bible School in England this year. They took part in so much during their time with us – reaching out to the very young, as well as to those not so young in our community, through door-to-door work and different events in the church.

Outreach to the local estate has also seen some great work being done... Many of the children, and indeed adults, are unchurched...

Please pray:

- Pray for continued outreach opportunities within the local community of Rathfriland.
- Pray for the small groups, that people will be excited and ready to learn from God's Word.
- Give thanks for the many children and young people who come along to various organisations within the church.

Competitive Bible quizzes and coffee shop outings



Norma Picking
Manager, Adelaide House

Adelaide House is a 45-bed residential home situated on a tree-lined park in south Belfast. Coming into Adelaide House, residents begin a new chapter of their lives, which we aim to make as happy and fulfilled as possible.

Daily devotions play an integral part of our day-to-day living; members of the local clergy visit each month and conduct a regular Communion service. One of our residents who will celebrate her 103rd birthday in April reads the Bible

verses without the aid of glasses. She is blessed with good health and also takes part in our Adelaide keep-fit club.

We have a great variety of entertainment, including Scottish dancers aged between 70-83 years who are fantastic. David Currie, who is a talented singer and keyboard player, makes monthly visits, and 'Tom the music man' is also a favourite. Prior to Christmas we had the pleasure of a visit from the Cregagh bell ringers and that was a wonderful occasion.

In Adelaide House we have a family room where residents may entertain their families and enjoy light refreshments.

Some of our more mobile residents like to be taken out to the cinema or to one of our many local coffee shops, accompanied by a member of staff. Some residents went to the Cutters Wharf for lunch and were delighted to watch the rowers as they passed by on the River Lagan.

Residents can become very competitive when it comes to our Bible quizzes. During the spring and summer days many hours are spent enjoying the peace and tranquillity of our garden. Valentine's Day was celebrated by each resident expressing

their thoughts on what love meant to them, and the cook excelled himself by providing a beautifully themed meal.

Visitors and family members who come into Adelaide House always comment on the friendly and welcoming

atmosphere that immediately makes them feel valued and relaxed. The commitment and enthusiasm of staff in the home never ceases to amaze me and this is reflected by their length of service, several of whom have been here for 20 or 30 years. We very much enjoyed having the Moderator, Dr William Henry, visit us last month – this was such a special occasion.

Coming into Adelaide House, residents begin a new chapter of their lives, which we aim to make as happy and fulfilled as possible.

Please pray:

- Please pray for all our residents.
- Pray for the provision of additional staff.
- Pray for the existing staff as they carry out their duties.

Relying daily on God in Kenya



Gary and Mary Reid Global mission workers, Kenya

Up to his knees wading through mucky water, Gary sought to secure the winch to a nearby tree. Our Land Rover wheels had disappeared into the earth again! Relentless rain had made any journey exceptionally difficult, and the dirt tracks were completely impassable in places.

That particular day, we struggled at length with getting stuck, breaking down, walking home – the last part of our journey carried out in the dark – seeking our Father's protection from any dangerous wildlife, including the nearby hyena. With much eventfulness, we finally were able to tow our lifeless Land Rover home and rejoiced in the wonderful goodness of our Lord. With guests coming before the end of the month, we knew that only our Lord could enable their visit to become a reality.

With both our Land Rovers damaged, Gary set to work fixing them, and with parts of our 'roads' completely impassable, beseeching prayer was given to the only one who could stop the relentless rain and send a scorching sun to dry up the ground. And our Lord did exactly that! Despite the forecast depicting heavy rainfall, our Lord granted days of scorching heat and we were enabled to get the digger to work.

Our guests, PCI Moderator, Dr William Henry, and his family, were able to make it – without getting stuck – into the Mission. On the many miles travelled, our Father enabled that only on one occasion did we need to use the winch to get the Land Rover out. Oh, how we blessed the Lord for his goodness.

God certainly went before us throughout their visit and we had a blessed time. It was special to us to be able to take the family

to Siana to meet some of the Maasai who come together to worship our Lord on the top of a mountain, where we hope by God's enabling to build a nursery class/church for this community, with the help of the Junior Sections of the Boys' Brigade in PCI congregations. Here Dr Henry shared a personal and encouraging message to all present and the Maasai, especially the children, really enjoyed their warmth and interaction.

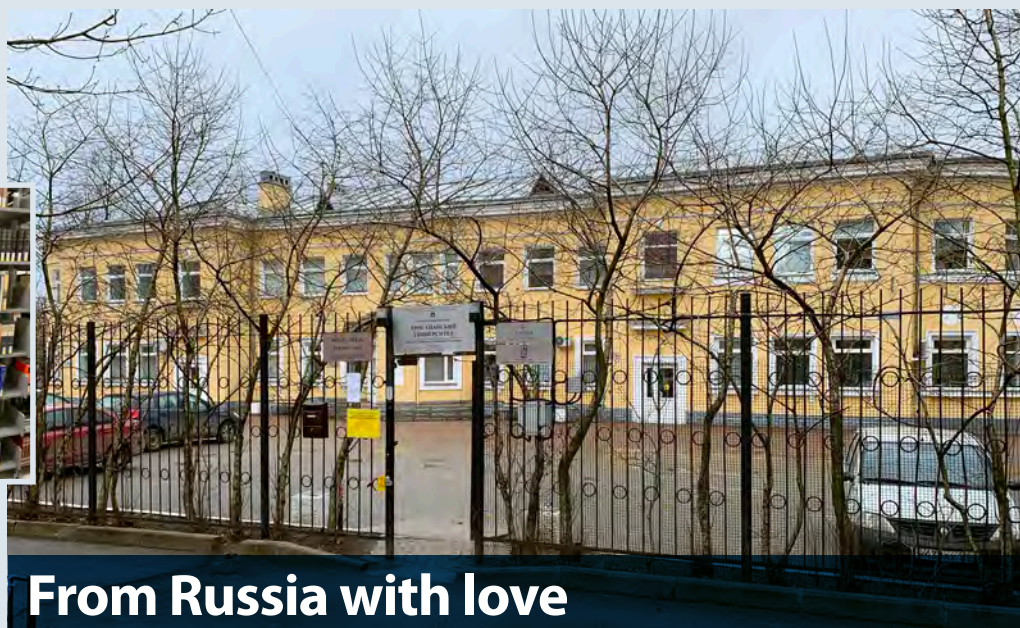
A visit was also made to one of our local primary/nursery schools in Olkinyei and our beautiful Maasai children were delighted having the Henry family spend time with them and show interest

in their work, alongside sharing God's message with them. Of course, the sweets and lollipops were warmly accepted too!

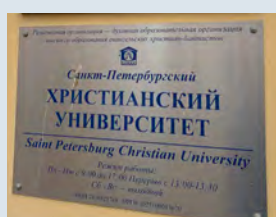
*God certainly went before us...and
we had a blessed time.*

Please pray:

- Give thanks for God's wonderful goodness in holding back the rain and drying up the 'roads'. Pray that this will continue for some weeks to enable more work to be carried out, to make the 'roads' more passable for the whole community.
- Give thanks for the visit of the Moderator and his family. The Maasai are very family oriented and it was special to have the whole family visit and seek to encourage and bless all whom they met.
- Pray that God's Holy Spirit will continue to work mightily in the lives of the beautiful Maasai for his glory and their joy.



From Russia with love



St Petersburg Christian University, Russia **Global mission partner**

The St Petersburg Christian University (SPbCU) in Russia is PCI's newest global mission partner. It was one of the first evangelical higher educational institutions to be established in Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union and in 2020, it will celebrate its 30th anniversary. It has excellent facilities not far from the centre of St Petersburg and is also an international affiliate member of the Council of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCC) of higher theological training institutions from around the world.

Since its establishment in 1990, it has trained hundreds of leaders and pastors in the Protestant tradition in Russia. Today it is probably the most established and best-known academic training centre for evangelical leaders and pastors in Russia.

What started out as humble beginnings grew into an institution with a good academic standing, offering bachelor and master's degree programmes in theology, Christian education and pastoral ministry. Plans to establish a master's programme in systematic theology, in collaboration with other universities abroad are progressing. Hopefully these links and agreements will be finalised soon, which will open the door for students to advance to a PhD level.

The rector of the university is Dr Valeriy Alikin. He grew up in Siberia and holds a PhD in New Testament from Lijden University in the Netherlands and is currently finishing post-doctoral research in Austria. As someone who is relatively fluent in eight languages, he is of great value to the university being able to communicate the purpose and mission of SPbCU with the outside world.

All staff members are committed Christians and actively involved in their local churches. Their united vision is to serve the church in Russia. The rector and staff of the university believe that the very existence of the institution in St Petersburg and the different satellite campuses in other parts of Russia is missional.

All staff members are committed Christians and actively involved in their local churches. Their united vision is to serve the church in Russia.

Apart from several satellite campuses in Russia, the university also attracts students to St Petersburg from other countries, as far away as Japan and Kazakhstan. It also runs a Bible school and other evening programmes

for non-degree purposes for those in the community who would like to be equipped in different fields of ministry. Several churches in St Petersburg also use the university premises for their worship services on Sundays.

The university needs support and prayer to fulfil its mission in Russia. It is mostly self-funded and as part of the fundraising for its ministry, it has a small hotel on the premises, called Logos.

Please pray:

- *Pray for the spiritual protection of the rector, staff and students.*
- *Pray that the university will be able to fulfil its mission without any interference.*
- *Pray for the spiritual and academic formation of students.*
- *Pray for a positive impact of the university in St Petersburg and Russia.*



Arousing the church to awaken the nation

Sonya Anderson

Deaconess in Shore Street Presbyterian Church, Donaghadee

'A'rousing the church to awaken the nation' was the theme of the MORE conference that was held in Shore Street church from 17 to 19 January this year. We were reminded of something that Tim Keller said: "In a revival, sleepy Christians wake up, nominal Christians get converted, and non-Christians get reached", and our challenge as Christians in the church was to 'wake up'.

We had a number of different speakers throughout the weekend and each one stretched us to be alert to what God is doing in our community and world, and indeed, how we can be part of it! We were reminded of the importance of having an intimate relationship with God and how this is key to reaching a broken world with the message of Christ. It was an exciting weekend for our church family and we sensed the presence of God as we worshipped together.

But as much as we love these conferences where we are refilled and fed, we know that the real work begins once the conference ends and we step back into our everyday, ordinary lives. Since the conference, it has been encouraging to hear stories from some people how they have been living out what they heard and were challenged with.

One particular story comes to mind of a girl who has been 'awakened' and I have had the joy of seeing God at work in her life. This girl became a Christian about 10 years ago and was really passionate about God. But things got in the way of her relationship with God and she really drifted from him. Years passed, and life got quite stressful and painful, and a real sense

of emptiness arose to the surface. She realised that she needed to restore and revive her relationship with God. It has been incredible to see how God has encouraged and increased faith in this girl over the past few years. I have seen God open doors in her workplace, that normally wouldn't open to someone at her level. These open doors have enabled her to implement procedures

of care and protection for vulnerable people. She has been given projects that enable God's kingdom values to become a reality in society. When she was at the MORE conference this year, God really spoke to her and affirmed in her heart another area in her workplace that she could get

involved in and really make a difference to people's lives. Within our own church, I have seen God using her experiences and gifts to help and encourage others. One recent way was in the implementation of a sensory room and support group for parents with children who have additional needs.

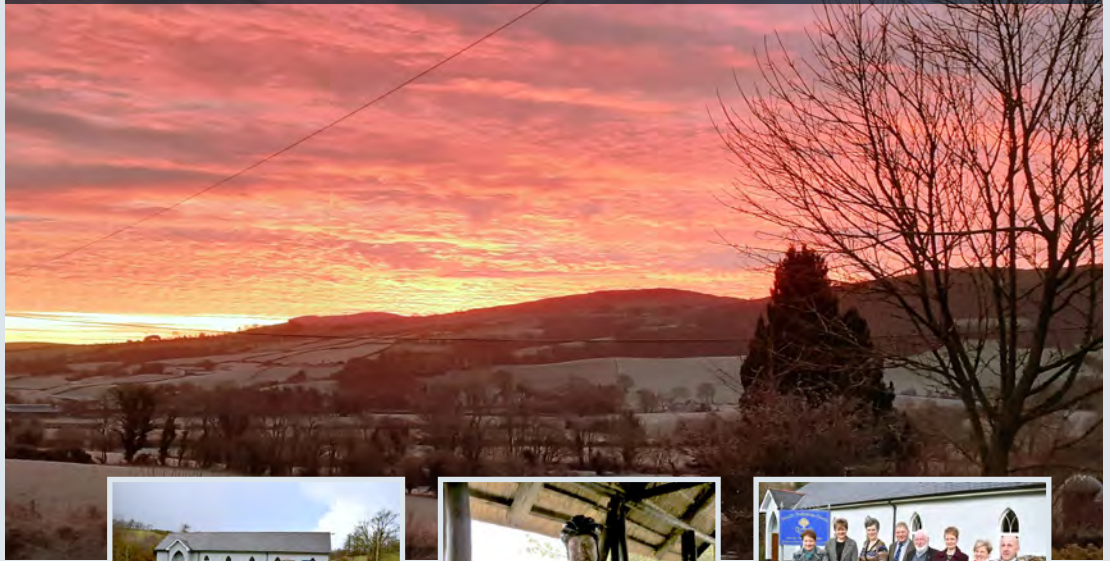
What a joy to see God at work!

As much as we love these conferences where we are refilled and fed...the real work begins once the conference ends and we step back into our everyday, ordinary lives.

Please pray:

- Pray for Christians who are trying to show and share Jesus in their workplaces, that they will persevere, be encouraged, and begin to see lives changed.
- Pray for Shore Street church family as we try to reach into our community with the message of Jesus.

A light in a dark place



Rev Rodney Thompson
Glenelly Presbyterian Church

Glenelly congregation is situated on the outskirts of Plumbridge in the heart of the Sperrin Mountains, west Tyrone. It is an area of outstanding natural beauty. However, despite the beautiful scenery, there is a kind of smog that hangs heavy in the air. Its unhealthy ingredients consist largely of nominal or empty religion, and secularism.

Into this difficult environment the congregation of Glenelly, along with others, seeks to shine rays of biblical light. Our mission statement is as follows: "For the glory of God, Glenelly desires to be a place where unsaved people hear the gospel, repent of sin and trust in Christ; where those who have become Christians are biblically equipped to worship and live for God by life and lip; and where gospel outreach to our local communities and the wider world is promoted."

In furtherance of this, there is the ongoing ministry of the Word on Sundays, at the midweek meeting, and backed up by the weekly prayer meeting. There is the daily personal witness of believing members. There is the regular work of Sunday school, along with our Friday club and Arise group outreach to children and young people (an off-site joint venture with our linked congregations of Badoney and Corrick). From time to time we undertake concentrated periods of outreach. For example: accompanying a recent congregational preaching mission, special evangelistic copies of John's Gospel were distributed to every home in the environs of Plumbridge. This was undertaken with the help of a former Irish mission worker who conducted house-to-

house visitation and had some good spiritual conversations in the process.

As far as wider world mission is concerned, Glenelly supports (both prayerfully and financially) the work of PCI, Tearfund, and its own minister's overseas cycling efforts in aid of medical mission in Malawi and Zambia.

Glenelly is a small congregation which endeavours, by God's grace, to be a light in a dark place. We are grateful for the prayerful

and financial support of the wider Church which facilitates the provision of ministry. However, the congregation is encouraged by the fact that in recent years it has been able to build a new meeting house welcome area, minor hall and related facilities – and all this without obtaining money from the Home Mission. The Lord did indeed provide. *Soli Deo Gloria* (To God alone be the glory)!

Regarding the future, Glenelly, with God's help, will continue to stand for the gospel of Christ in a very needy area. To that end we would ask that the PCI family continues to stand with us in prayer.

Please pray:

- *Pray for an outpouring of God's Spirit on church and community.*
- *Pray the ongoing ministry of the Word and for a greater interest in prayer.*
- *Pray for the work of the Sunday school, Friday club and Arise group and annual holiday Bible club.*

■ **COVID-19** – Pray for the people developing better tests to diagnose the virus, vaccines to prevent it, and protocols and communication to eliminate the disease's spread.

■ **COMMUNITY OUTREACH** – Michelle Stewart serving as community outreach worker in Cloughy Presbyterian Church. Pray for the congregation's planned 'Mission 2020' events to bear much fruit.

■ **HOME MISSION** – Rev Mark Proctor and the congregation of Naas. Pray that 'SoulWorks' will increasingly be an effective outreach to those who come along.

■ **KENYA** – Naomi Leremore and members of the Theological Education by Extension writing team, as they prepare resources to help people grow in their Christian lives.

■ **CHAPLAINS** – Rev John Gilkinson serving as chaplain at Belfast City Hospital as he ministers to patients, their families and staff. Pray that God will open opportunities to tell others of God's love.

■ **HOME MISSION** – The life and witness of Drogheda congregation and for the minister Rev Damien Burke, that God will continue to bless them as they serve him.

■ **CORONAVIRUS** – Please pray for all our Social Witness homes and units at this difficult time of the coronavirus. Pray for the safety and good health of the residents and tenants, for the resilience and energy of staff as they work through this demanding time. Pray for the patience and understanding of all who visit, that they will appreciate that as a care provider, we must reduce the risk of infection coming into our homes and units. Pray for the executive management as they manage this demanding and stressful time.

■ **NEPAL** – Peter Lockwood in his role as programme advisor with United Mission to Nepal and Valerie in her work in expatriate support with UMN in their day-to-day work. Pray too for their three children at school in Kathmandu.

■ **DEACONESS** – Roberta Irvine in Greystone Road, Antrim, for the Holy Spirit to give Roberta the words to say in conversations to point people to Jesus.

■ **ZAMBIA** – Diane Cusick as she works with teachers in the early childhood development centres, community schools and primary schools, and that they will grasp the notion that play is actually a learning tool for children.

■ **HOME MISSION** – Give thanks that over

the winter months attendance at Sunday worship in Ballymagrane has been very good and that the midweek meeting has grown in fellowship too. Pray for the congregation and the minister, Rev Roger McElnea.

■ **HOMELESSNESS** – Pray for those homeless individuals who are exposed to the elements as they sleep rough on our streets. Pray for those who work tirelessly to bring relief and give support. Pray for those hostels that provide both short and long-term care.

■ **INTERNATIONAL MEETING POINT** – Keith Preston and the work of the International Meeting Point in Belfast, seeking to reach out with the good news of salvation to asylum

seekers and others from overseas who have recently arrived in Northern Ireland. Pray especially for the development of their new projects in north Belfast.

■ **MYANMAR** – Remember the leadership of the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar, particularly Rev Ramthanga, the General Secretary. Pray too for peace in the mission fields and opportunities to share the gospel.

■ **HOME MISSION** – Rev Keith McCrory and Maynooth congregation as they plan towards the construction of a new church complex in the town. Pray too for the congregation's youth and student groups.

■ **COMMUNITY OUTREACH** – Owen Wilson who has recently been appointed as a community outreach worker in Crumlin Presbyterian Church. Pray for him as he settles into his new role and begins to get to know local people.

■ **REFUGEE CRISIS** – People throughout the world who find themselves with little choice, but to leave their homes, possessions and livelihoods and seek refuge in other countries. Pray they will receive the humanitarian assistance they need.

■ **ADELAIDE HOUSE** – Pray for those who reside in the oldest home provided by the Older People Services committee, opened in 1948. Pray for Norma Picking (home manager) and her team. Pray that their morning devotions will be uplifting and a blessing to all who attend.

■ **HOME MISSION** – The congregation of Dundalk and their continued witness in the

town and surrounding area. Remember especially their minister Rev Jonathan Porter, the elders and leaders within the congregation.

■ **CHAPLAINS** – Forces chaplains posted overseas, especially those on deployment with service personnel.

■ **LEADERS IN TRAINING** – Leaders from partner churches which PCI supports while they undertake further study aimed at helping their personal development for future ministry and leadership within their church and context.

■ **MIDDLE EAST** – Bethlehem Bible College and the Near East School of Theology (Lebanon). Pray that the fellowship and teaching at these two colleges will envision and equip students well for future Christian service.

■ **HOME MISSION** – Rev Stephen Richmond and Donegal and Stranorlar congregations. Pray that God's Spirit would be present and at work as they share Jesus with young and old, locals and visitors.

■ **MALAWI** – Volker Glissmann as he continues working with Theological Education by Extension in Malawi. Pray for him as he finalises a book on lay participation and does research into the history of Theological Education by Extension.

■ **TAKING CARE 3** – Pray for the Taking Care task group as they draft the next edition of the PCI guidelines in the whole area of safeguarding. Pray that the new material will be fit for purpose and user-friendly.

■ **COMMUNITY OUTREACH** – Mark Annett, community outreach worker in First Rathfriland. Pray for the new welcome area in their church hall, that it will allow people from the church to engage with more parents and young people at events taking place in the hall.

■ **HOME MISSION** – The congregations of Ballyhobridge, Clones, Newbliss and Stonebridge, that the Lord will lead them through this time of vacancy.

■ **EUROPE** – For all the programmes of the Faculté Jean Calvin in France including preparations for a new MTh in the English language. Pray that students will be envisioned by God as they prepare for ministry.

■ **CHAPLAINS** – Rev Cheryl Meban as she provides pastoral support to students at the Jordanstown and Belfast campuses of Ulster University and seeks opportunities to share the gospel.



Naomi and Thomas Leremore



Rev Cheryl Meban

It's the little things

Betsy Cameron



Have you ever wondered what four litres of milk look like? And, no, I don't mean when it's sitting nicely on the shelf in the shop or behaving itself in the door of your fridge. I mean when it is rising like a storm surge on the floor, flowing over your shoes and cascading down the checkout aisle to the horror of all present? Well, if you have – and let me say, that would be very weird – I can direct you to the CCTV footage in the small local shop I (used to) frequent and you can see for yourself. And, yes, it was just as mortifying as you are imagining.

I had stopped to pick up a few things we needed and was rushing to keep up with the packing as there was a long queue behind me (of course there was). I went to set the bag with the milk down at my feet to get it out of the way, and with a mere inch or two before it reached the safety of solid ground, I lost my grip on the handles. Physics then took over and the milk hit the floor with an ominous thwack, both containers splitting on impact. The startled young woman at the till leapt over the counter and began throwing little scraps of kitchen roll at the deluge while another shocked employee ran to get a nearby sopping wet mop with which he pushed billows of milk from one side of the aisle to the other. I was no better, resorting to kicking the spreading milk in a frantic attempt to do something.

It was such a little drop but caused such a big mess! And isn't that true of so many things? The slightest miscalculation or the smallest ill-chosen word can do great damage. If you're of my vintage, you might remember the old rhyme about the catastrophic consequences of not having a nail for a horseshoe – the loss of the whole kingdom in battle. The letter of James in the Bible reminds us of the power of little things: the tiny bit that controls a horse, the small rudder that steers a ship, the spark that starts a huge fire and the great damage caused by our careless tongues.

Little things can also do great good. Many stories in the Bible illustrate the power of little things: the tiny mustard seed which grows into a large plant, the widow's mite, the fishes and loaves which fed a multitude. It is encouraging to know that little things matter hugely. I don't know about you, but I am certainly overwhelmed at the moment by the big things – coronavirus, melting ice caps, globalisation, political instability, poverty. So it comforts me to think of how important the small things can

be, the things I can control and influence. I can make ethical choices in shopping, I can show kindness to people I see, I can smile more. The folk singer and social activist Pete Seeger believed in the unstoppable power of 'tens of millions of little things' in making a big difference.

My friend Pauline knows how important the little things are. She cares for others in so many small, but loving and imaginative, ways: a knock on the door and a surprise cake delivery, a phone call to say 'you're wonderful!', a humour-filled card in the post, an encouraging text, an offer to help, a lift to church, a beautiful bunch of flowers. Speaking of flowers, it was our turn to host the ecumenical World Day of Prayer service recently, and Pauline was asked, naturally, to take care of the floral arrangements. A week ahead of time, she bought the lilies in a particular shade of yellow to match the colour of the flag of Zimbabwe, our host country. They were tightly closed buds, but she babysat them, rotating them from the conservatory to the sitting room daily so they would be open and at their peak just in time for our service. I don't need to tell you, they were stunning.

What small things can you do that might, just might, make a difference? Visiting someone who could be lonely? Reaching out to a person you are at odds with? Saying thank you more often and practising gratitude? A famous quotation, of uncertain origin it seems, sums it up beautifully: "Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love."

We often think of God as being in charge of all the big things – speaking the world into creation, leading the people out of slavery into freedom, conquering the power of death. But it is wonderful to think of God as working through the small things too.

I took away many lessons from my mortifying experience in the shop. Little things make a big difference. Never grumble about a slow queue. You can't kick spilt milk.

And gravity always wins.

What small things can you do that might, just might, make a difference?

Strengthening *your pastoral core*



Tom Finnegan outlines some very helpful advice on using the Bible in pastoral visits.

The doorbell rings... it's your elder from church. The kids are running wild and it's not long to dinner time but you feel you should invite him in. He sits down and launches into an exposition of the Bible passage he has prepared. His mini-sermon doesn't connect at all with where you are at spiritually or literally at this moment. He makes some cursory conversation, prays a non-specific prayer and leaves. You don't feel blessed.

That was a worst-case scenario. Hopefully it's a rare occurrence. What is probably more common is a pastoral conversation that sticks to the weather or other similar 'safe' subjects with little spiritual content. The worst-case scenario demonstrates a lack of empathy and understanding of the situation. The more common scenario could be because of a lack of confidence or equipping in how to introduce the Bible and prayer into a pastoral visit. This can be a challenge for elders and others who visit on a voluntary basis such as members of a pastoral care team. What makes it a greater challenge is a reticence in our culture to talk about spiritual things, even amongst Christians.

Thankfully, there are ways to help get over that hurdle.

For elders and pastoral care team members, it is always worthwhile to develop the ability to add a spiritual element to a pastoral conversation. For those who are less experienced, this doesn't have to be a big step – it can be as simple as just trying one of the easier to-do suggestions below. These pointers aim to help increase the spiritual effectiveness of a pastoral visit.

Ask yourself: is a visit the best way to deliver pastoral care? For some people the answer is a very obvious 'yes' especially if they are housebound or in a nursing home. Older people who live on their own are likely to welcome a visit – but they may also appreciate an invitation to go out for coffee. The best time to chat

to parents with young children is often over tea and coffee after the Sunday service. They may already receive most of their pastoral care through a home group, Presbyterian Women or another congregational group which meets regularly. There are different models and structures for pastoral care which may mean not everyone needs a visit – but there will always be some who do.

Try to arrange a visit in advance. As well as ensuring the visit is at a good time, there is another practical reason for this. Elders who work during the day normally have to make their visits in the evening. Especially with elderly people, it's better to arrange a visit in advance so they know that it's you at the door and not a stranger.

Pray beforehand – and after. It seems obvious to cover pastoral visits in prayer but it's easy to forget or to rush from one visit to another without prayer.

When you arrive, read the situation and respond appropriately. You might need to say, "It looks like now might not be a good time, is there a better time for me to call?" Listen carefully and notice what is going on in the person's life. You

...it's your elder from church...He makes some cursory conversation, prays a non-specific prayer and leaves.

may know something about the situation beforehand, for example, if there has been a bereavement but even then, until you visit, you won't know how the bereaved person is dealing with the loss of a loved one.

Have some options rather than a 'set piece' for everyone. You could have a chosen Bible passage or verse you share with most people – perhaps a common theme that the kirk session has agreed. But always be prepared to offer something else if the situation requires it. If spiritual questions arise, provide answers from the Bible even if it takes another visit to allow you time to find out the answer. Don't dodge this challenge by saying, "Ask the minister, next time you see him/her" when you could follow up the answer yourself. Instead ask your minister to help you answer the question so that you also grow and learn.

Present a Bible passage or verse which you have applied in your own life. You could say, "I've found this verse helpful, I hope it helps you too..." or "this verse really helped me understand how amazing God's grace is..." The more you know and apply to the Bible to yourself, the more you will have to share with others. There may be some ways God has used his Word to help you that are specific to your circumstances and your personality but there are many things

...a lack of confidence or equipping in how to introduce the Bible and prayer into a pastoral visit.

that apply to everyone.

Be aware of the person's spiritual state. Are you encouraging a brother or sister in Christ or helping someone who doesn't believe grasp something of the truth of the gospel? This will affect what you share and how you pray.

Ask what to pray for and pray specific prayers. Not all prayer requests are valid. You'll have to say no to "Please pray I would win the lottery" but you can pray "Please provide for every need". If for whatever reason you don't pray during the visit (perhaps because you weren't invited in but only chatted at the door) you can say as you leave, "I'll be praying for you" – but make sure you do.

Pray short but relevant prayers. A long-winded prayer is hard to follow. A short prayer bringing specific concerns to God will be more of a blessing.

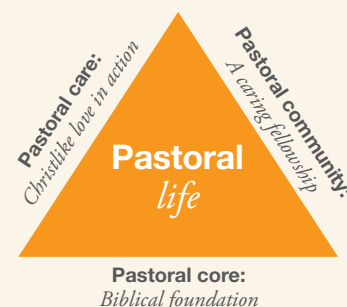
Help people engage with the Bible and pray. Some people you visit may know the Bible better than you. There will probably be many more who could use some help. If you have found helpful

daily Bible reading notes, suggest they use them or better, give them a copy. A resource that has suggestions for prayer is especially helpful. There are many resources available, the 'Tides' resource from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland being a good example.

Tom Finnegan is PCI's Training Development Officer.

Pastoral life triangle

This article helps provide some insight to adding the dimension of 'pastoral core' of biblical content to face-to-face 'pastoral care' as illustrated in the pastoral life triangle.



Using the Bible cards

For those who approach using the Bible in pastoral care with some trepidation, there is a resource to help.

A series of 11 'Using the Bible in pastoral care' cards are available to download from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland website: www.presbyterianireland.org/Resources/Pastoral-Care/Using-the-Bible-in-pastoral-care-cards.aspx

They are also available in an interactive PDF version for use on a smartphone. A short introduction is provided which can be rephrased in your own words along with possible questions and responses followed by a suggested prayer. The Bible passages and topics are:

- Psalm 23 – God's presence
- Psalm 121 – God watches over us
- Philippians 4:4-7 – God's peace
- Mark 2:1-12 – Forgiveness of sins
- Romans 8: 31-32 – Generous God
- Matthew 11:28-29 – An invitation to rest
- Hebrews 12:1-3 – Running the race
- Revelation 21:1-5 – The ultimate healing
- Ephesians 4:26-27, 31-32 – Dealing with anger

Matthew 1:18-25 – Christmas – God with us

Luke 24:1-8 – Easter – Mission accomplished

The cards not only act as a resource but hopefully also model one helpful way to use the Bible in pastoral conversations. A particular card can be chosen based on the circumstances, for example, some are more appropriate for use with those who have not come to faith in Christ, such as Mark 2:1-12 on forgiveness of sins. Others are more focused on the Christian journey such as Hebrews 12:1-3 and there are several cards for helping Christians in difficult times. It is worth reading over all the cards and reflecting and praying on the Bible passages and questions personally to be better equipped to use them with others.



Equipping young people *to be everyday disciples*

Steve Rouse outlines why the church needs to prioritise its discipleship of young people.



Evie is one of the sweetest six-year-olds you could ever hope to meet. She's bright, funny and has a wonderfully inquisitive mind.

One Sunday evening, after having been with us at church that morning, she was home being tucked into bed by her dad. Evie was in the mood to fire one of those parent-stretching questions that only six-year-olds can – you know the sort: How did people make the first tools, if they didn't have any tools? Where do thoughts come from? Why don't crabs have eyebrows? Those kind of questions. Well Evie's question floored her dad: "Daaaad! What do you think God has on his duvet cover?" It's a great question and one day I'm going to write a book for parents using that title!

Equipping our young people to be everyday disciples is about helping them make connections between their faith and their everyday lives. But how do we equip them when the landscape has shifted so far? Young people are trying to navigate a world that is broadly computer based rather than book based; a world where social media has reshaped the way they do relationships; a world where they might never own a home; and a world where their sexual identity is often determined and decided in the playground at school. How do you equip young people to be disciples when this is the landscape?

I've spent the past 23 years leading a church in south-west London where, on any given Sunday, a young person will join us for worship, sing with passion, say the right words but will be carrying a weapon in their pocket because they're meeting up for a gang fight in the local park when we've finished.

I'm also the dad of two children – incredible young humans – Brianna (21) and Jackson (20). We have worked hard to help them navigate the challenging terrain of teenage years and it's been a focus on whole-life discipling that has given us the framework to do this well.

The natural question is: What is an everyday disciple? What is your definition of a disciple? If we don't know what sort of person we're trying to shape and form then we'll have no idea how to equip them. The definition I would offer is: 'A disciple is someone who is learning to live the way of Jesus in their context at this moment'. It's a simple definition but

Equipping our young people to be everyday disciples is about helping them make connections between their faith and their everyday lives.

it contains so much – the way of Jesus is learned; it doesn't happen automatically as I thought it did. The day I was baptised in May 1986 as an 18-year-old, I was convinced that I was about to become 'super Christian', able to handle any temptation, able to evangelise with ease and confidence – but what I discovered very quickly was that I still struggled with temptation and it was still hard not to lose my temper on the football pitch.

Discipleship is also about context and moment – it's about the stage of life we're at and the places we are in, and that will vary from person to person. What if a child discovers that God loved dance or football as much as they do? What if a young person discovers that the classroom they occupy and the clubs they belong to are places where God wants them to help others flourish?

Equipping young people is about realising the importance of these two depictions of church life. On the left the gathered church – the community where we stir each other up to live for God. And on the right the scattered church – the church we are Monday to Saturday in all the places where we live, work, study and play. It's about helping our young people recognise that they are not just part of the church on a Sunday, they are part of the church every day of the week, wherever they are.

The other question that comes up for



me is: How do we equip young disciples? The only fruit I was expected to bear as a young disciple was ‘converts’ – it was all about sharing my faith and bringing my friends along on Sunday.

This was epitomised by our youth leaders’ efforts to put on embarrassing Saturday night evangelistic events that I was to bring my friends along to. The youth leaders, who were mostly my dad’s age, would form a ‘band’ and try and look cool by wearing baseball caps the wrong way round, and they would play terrible music from their era – like the Beatles! They always used the same line to persuade us to get a friend to come along: “Just imagine if your friend doesn’t come and on Monday they get run over by a BIG RED BUS!” That phrase was always enough to put the fear of God into me, but I still couldn’t get up the courage to invite my best mate Kevin along. And here’s the funny thing – it took me years to realise that there were no big red buses in our town. Kevin was never going to get run over by one!

If we are going to equip our young people today, then I think we need a broader framework. The London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (LICC) has developed the six Ms:

- Model godly character
- Make good work
- Minister grace and love

...they are not just part of the church on a Sunday, they are part of the church every day of the week, wherever they are.

- Mould culture
- Be a Mouthpiece for truth and justice
- Be a Messenger of the gospel

It’s about envisioning our young people with an understanding of a gospel that embraces and gives purpose to the whole of their lives. Equipping them so that they can go and naturally bear fruit with confidence that God will be good news through who they are, how they do their work and how they help others to flourish.

Like Naomi who always felt uncomfortable with the way people treated Alice.

She would see Alice walking to school on her own, sitting on her own at lunchtime. Everyone just knew that Alice had learning difficulties. But then something happened; Naomi started to follow Jesus and it changed the way she saw people around her, including Alice. This inspired Naomi to do something brave – she started to walk to school with Alice and make sure she was included in her friendship group. Naomi’s actions contributed massively to Alice’s growth

in confidence, and it changed Naomi’s friends too.

Why does the church need to do this? Because the biblical mandate inspires us to live out these values on earth. As Gabe Lyons, head of Q Ideas in the USA, says, “The next wave of influence will come from the pews.” Whether you still have pews or not, we need to equip our young people to be everyday disciples – disciples who understand that God is working to redeem and restore this broken world. He wants to partner with them wherever they are, whoever they are, in order that his kingdom comes and his will is done on earth as in heaven. He even cares what people have on their duvet covers!

Steve Rouse spends his time with churches, church leaders and church networks in the UK who

are keen to focus their faith communities on whole-life discipleship. He is the church team director at the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity (LICC). He also helps lead Balham Baptist Church. Steve led a day in March with PCI youth workers on ‘Discipling young people for their everyday lives’.



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A San Francisco story

Alan Meban chats to Bruce Reyes-Chow, and hears what it's like being a Presbyterian minister in San Francisco.

This is the first article in a short series of interviews with Presbyterian ministers working in different situations around the world. A common theme will be examining what being reformed means in their context.

I've known fellow blogger Rev Bruce Reyes-Chow online for more than a decade. Ordained in 1995, he served as Presbyterian Church (USA) Moderator from 2008 to 2010, the youngest ever elected by the denomination. Bruce is currently the minister of First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto, San Francisco. He describes himself as a third generation Chinese/Filipino, armchair sociologist and technology enthusiast. In 2012 he wrote *The Definitive-ish Guide for Using Social Media in the Church*.

Describe your congregation?

After 30 years in an urban San Francisco setting, working with incredibly diverse congregations and communities, I moved 35 miles out from the city centre to Palo Alto last April.

The church is about 125 years old. It's been known as the social justice church in this area for a very long time, part

of the sanctuary movement during the Vietnam War for conscientious objectors. The international civil rights leader and campaigner against US involvement in the Vietnam War, Robert McAfee Brown, was a preacher here.

We probably have anywhere from 60 to 100 worshippers each Sunday. Most are in their 60s and 70s, a small spattering of 50s and a growing number of 30s. But it's pretty white which is glaring considering the sizeable diverse Asian population in Palo Alto.

What led you into ministry?

I'm born and raised Presbyterian. My home church was founded out of the farm worker strikes in the Central Valley of California and always had a focus on

community involvement and justice.

My mother worked for the state legislature in California and I was originally going to law school in order to enter politics. Then I discovered that the lobbying firm I worked for represented some of the farm owners of the very people that my grandparents and their community struck against. It was one of those times when I had to decide whether my time and energy were going to support institutions that reinforce oppression or would be with communities trying to fight it. It was an easy decision and the Presbyterian Church (USA) has been my home since ordination 25 years ago.

An influx of well-paid jobs in technology firms around San Francisco has caused house prices and rental rates to rapidly rise, creating a housing crisis that causes many workers to live far outside the city and commute long distances each day, while some of those without work have become homeless. Attending a fact-checking symposium at Facebook's San Francisco headquarters last November, I spent my one free afternoon on an open-top

In our tradition, going back and forth takes so long, but ultimately I think we do get a better understanding of how God is trying to direct the church.



bus tour of the city. Tents lined the pavements outside some inner-city churches. One Uber driver explained that he was an engineering lecturer in a local university but taxied for four hours each morning in order to supplement his income to afford the rent on his family home. How does a congregation and its pastor deal with that?

In San Francisco, folks experiencing homelessness would come into your congregation all the time. In Palo Alto, that's not happening yet. But we are seeing a definite increase of people who are struggling, who are coming into church looking for help.

When it comes to folks who are experiencing homelessness, [as part of a rota of local churches] we host 50 people living on campus for a month every year. This congregation is strong around service, money, time, talent, but the members are of a generation that think you don't need to talk about it because people will just know. But that's a mistake: people don't think of churches as the first place to turn.

So we're trying to reimagine what faith looks like today. I'm not fighting people about theological or social positions. It's really about how we share this better, how we get it out there.

Will churches raise their voice in the public square during this year's US elections?

While churches are legally not allowed to endorse individual candidates, many churches partner with organisations that support different 'sides' of the aisle. In many churches, these latest political traumas have forced them to speak up, while others have been speaking into these spaces for a long time.

How well does PC (USA) deal with conflict?

Trying to keep the broadest middle that we can is important without sacrificing our understanding of, for me, what it

means to take actions that further harm our siblings.

I think that's modelled by our leadership. Do we decide that we're going to be Trumpian in our nature and name-call and bully and badger or are we going to truly be folks that invite people into spaces, understand both times of anger as

...it's important to continue to be aware of our connections to other denominations around the globe.

well as times of humility and selflessness.

One of the dangers of our system is that we expect everybody to be civil all the time and that often stifles voices. I think that we've been able to find ways to allow people to experience a range of emotions as they go through the process of discernment.

This is the system I chose to be part of. Is it flawless? No, certainly not. But I do think it is how we best discern the mind of Christ and the will of God.

What does it mean to be reformed in your context?

Sempre reformata, reforming according to the Word. I think progressive churches have sometimes forgotten that Scripture grounds our justice. So I'm talking a lot with the congregation about how the intellect they carry informs our understanding of Scripture, and then their passion for politics and social issues is how it's lived out. New people in our church glaze over when we start into what it means to be reformed, but they light up when we talk about how we're always changing because Scripture is always alive, and if we calcify we run the risk of losing out on opportunities to live differently.

It's also about governance. One of the reasons I like our polity is because it takes us so long to make decisions. We discern and once those decisions are made they hold a high level of import for me. It's unlike another denomination where the council of bishops might say this is what we decide and the culture is that's what everybody believes. In our tradition, going back and forth takes so long, but ultimately I think we do get a better understanding of how God is trying to direct the church.

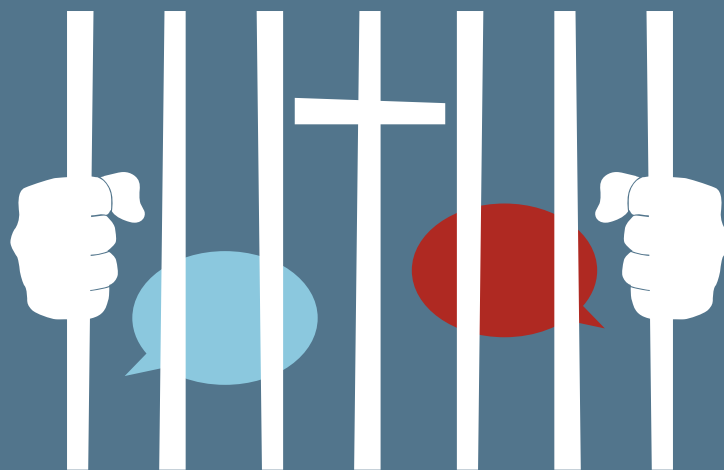
Are you conscious that you are part of a worldwide reformed family?

I've had such great and deep and profound experiences with colleagues from other denominations: the uniting church in Canada, the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the United Church of Christ in the Philippines.

These are folks who have informed my understanding of the world. I've had this great privilege of being able to travel globally, meeting partners and finding out how we are responding to crisis with other denominations.

Those are the pieces that I help try to feed into the life of the church. So I hugely value it but I know there are a lot of people that don't value those things. I don't hold it against people, but I do think it's important to continue to be aware of our connections to other denominations around the globe.

As this article went to print, the Session at First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto announced their decision "with an abundance of caution and care" to shift gatherings from in-person to online beginning immediately, with Sunday morning services going online until at least the end of April due to someone who uses the church premises testing positive for coronavirus.



Debating the **persecution of Christians**

Cecil Graham reports on a recent debate in the House of Commons which focused on the growing persecution of Christians around the world.

In our family circle, I am often viewed as 'a square', particularly in regard to my TV viewing preferences, i.e. current affairs programmes, parliamentary debates etc. The UK House of Commons' debate on 'Persecution of Christians' held on 6 February 2020 lasted for almost three hours. I found it to be challenging and distressing. The following article seeks to summarise the main points as detailed in the 63-page Hansard transcript of the proceedings.

In introducing the debate, Heather Wheeler MP (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs) said, "The suffering of men, women and children persecuted for their faith or belief is a matter of deep concern to the government. On every continent, religious minorities are under threat. Everyone across the House will remember last year's Easter bombing attack on churches and hotels in Sri Lanka, which was deeply saddening.

"Despite our long-standing support of freedom of religion or belief, it is fair to say that we had not given the particular issue of Christian persecution the attention it deserved. That is why in 2018 the then Foreign Secretary commissioned an independent review to consider what more the Foreign and Commonwealth

Office could do to support persecuted Christians overseas. The Bishop of Truro was asked to consider tough questions and the government has accepted all his recommendations."

Despite this reference to the Truro Report, very few references were made to it in the ensuing debate. However, in terms of examples of specific instances of persecution, most of the contributors referred to information provided by the Open Doors organisation. Over 100 parliamentarians attended the Open Doors presentation held at Westminster in January 2020, when the evidence presented suggests that persecution continues to worsen.

Fabian Hamilton MP in his contribution said, "The report found yet again that the persecution of Christians is becoming both more widespread and more serious. Of the 50 countries on the Open Doors annual watch list, 45 of them

...in 2019 approximately 260 million Christians across the world were at risk of persecution, up from 245 million in 2018...

are places where Christians were rated as experiencing very high or extreme levels of persecution in 2019, double the number of countries that were given that rating in 2014. The increase means that in 2019 approximately 260 million Christians across the world were at risk of persecution, up from 245 million in 2018 and 215 million in 2017."

Sir William Cash MP said, "The International Society for Human Rights estimates that Christians are the targets of about 80% of all acts of religious discrimination or persecution worldwide, so it is significant that this debate focuses on persecution against Christians."

In the wide-ranging debate, references were made to the many challenges arising, particularly in the following countries:

North Korea

This country has been at the top of Open Doors' world watch list for a long time. Andrew Selous MP stated, "I learnt recently of a report from a defector from the North Korean national security agency, who was talking about being trained to look for things such as people who remained silent, with their eyes closed; people who are meditating; and habitual smokers or drinkers who have stopped smoking or drinking all of a



sudden. Those people were to be watched closely because those things were a sign that they might well be Christians. Severe recriminations, including torture, often leading to death, would follow as a result. North Korean national security service spies are commissioned to set up fake secret prayer meetings to attract Christians, who again will then be imprisoned.

China

Fabian Hamilton MP said, “The Chinese Christian community, estimated to be 90 million people and rising, has faced an escalating wave of repression, interference and mistreatment over the past two years. According to Open Doors, over 5,500 Chinese churches were destroyed, closed down or confiscated during 2019. China has risen to number 23 on its world watch list, up from number 43 in 2018. Anyone under the age of 18 is banned from attending church. The celebration of Christmas in Christian churches has also been banned. Surveillance cameras and facial recognition has been ordered to be installed in every remaining church, so that authorities can identify all worshippers and listen to the readings and sermons they hear. This in turn leads to the routine detention and jailing of worshippers and their pastors under false charges of seeking to subvert state power.”

Nigeria

Sir Edward Leigh MP said, “Life can be unpredictably and unbearably short for Christians in the killing fields of northern Nigeria. Some 1,300 Nigerian Christians have been killed in the past year, in addition to more than 6,000 deaths since 2015. In Rivers State in 2018, Islamic gunmen invoking the name of God opened fire on Christians returning from a church service, killing 17 and raping any vulnerable woman who could not escape.”

Fiona Bruce MP instanced other examples of persecution and stated that in Nigeria more people were murdered for their faith than in any other country in the world. She highlighted the killing of



Heather Wheeler MP

10 Christian men who were beheaded and whose murders were graphically shown to the world in a video released on Christmas Day 2019. She quoted comments made by Bishop Matthew

Kukah in his criticism of the Nigerian government by placing ‘hard-line Muslims’ in key government positions who said, “They are using the levers of power to secure the supremacy of Islam... Christians have every reason to feel insecure and there is a general feeling of marginalisation from the political process. If the principles of our religion

...over 5,500 Chinese churches were destroyed, closed down or confiscated during 2019.

were different, there would be civil war by now” – meaning that the only thing preventing Nigeria from being engulfed in civil war are the peaceful tenets of Christianity.

The Middle East

Col Bob Stewart MP noted that in 2003 there were 1.5 million Christians in Iraq; now there are 160,000. He said, “Throughout the Middle East in the past 100 years, huge numbers of Christians have left. They used to make up 25% of the population, and now the figure is 5%. Is that not appalling?” Jim Shannon MP in his contribution noted that Christians have been displaced in Syria, Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Libya and Tunisia. The Strangford MP is the chair of an all-party parliamentary group on international freedom of religion or belief and during the debate several members referred to his tireless work to ensure issues about



Fabian Hamilton MP

religious persecution are regularly raised in the House.

Other issues

In a lively and, at times, impassioned debate, the focus was on highlighting religious persecution across the world, arising mainly from the way in which

blasphemy laws are widely abused in many countries. A related matter referred to the government’s International Development Fund and several members suggested the government should have a policy of using that budget to put pressure on the recipient countries who abuse human rights.

One member, in affirming the importance of highlighting the issue of the international persecution of Christians, said, “We also need to address how Christians across the United Kingdom sometimes feel. Some of the groups that contacted me over the past year have highlighted a gradual perception of the erosion of beliefs and values related to Christianity across the United Kingdom.”

The need to be aware of the suffering of other religious groups across the world was also raised, e.g. Muslims in China, Myanmar and New Zealand; the rise of Hindu nationalism, etc. It was said, “An attack on people of any faith is an attack on people of all faiths.” The Under Secretary of State, in her summing-up remarks said, “It would be remiss of us not to recognise that discrimination against and hostility towards faith groups also exists in Western countries. We were sickened to see antisemitic graffiti sprayed on businesses and synagogues around north London in December past and also in New York, when five victims were stabbed as they worshipped at the home of their rabbi.”

“We are hard-pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed”

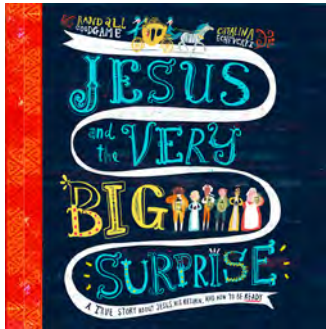
(2 Corinthians 4:8-10).



Cecil Graham is an elder in Windsor Presbyterian Church and former Boys’ Brigade secretary for Training and Development.

REVIEWS

Unless otherwise stated all resources are available from your local Faith Mission Bookshop or online www.fmbookshops.com



Jesus and the Very Big Surprise – A true story about Jesus, His return, and how to be ready.

Randall Goodgame

THE GOOD BOOK COMPANY

£7.64



"I know Randall Goodgame from the 'Slugs and Bugs' albums, we love them in my house so I was excited to read this book.

It is all about our God of surprises. The way Jesus arrived on earth, how he lived, the friends he made and the way he died were all a big surprise to people. In this book Randall Goodgame tells the story of the Master and his servants from Luke 12:35-38 to teach us about the surprising way in which Jesus will return to his people, and to help us to think about being ready for his return. He sings about the same story in the first 'Slugs and Bugs' album in a song called *Be Dressed*, it's one of my favourites!

Randall Goodgame says that while we're waiting for Jesus to return we can do things like serving the hungry, caring for the lonely, sharing with our friends and forgiving our enemies.

I don't remember ever doing this story in my Sunday club so I enjoyed learning about it here. I like how Jesus used stories to explain things to his disciples. This book also has some nice drawings which I really liked. I enjoyed reading the book and my little sisters loved listening to it, I would recommend it to other children between four and six years of age. It is short and it was easy to read.

AS



Every Job A Parable

John Van Sloten

HODDER & STOUGHTON

£5.68 (Amazon)



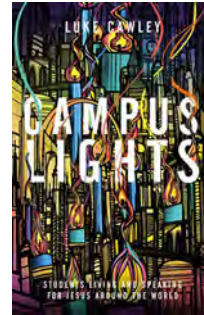
"God is more present at your work than you know." What a thought-provoking line. For so many of us, we struggle with how our walk with God can merge with the routines that we find forming in our lives from Monday to Friday.

This book is full of a whole range of examples of different jobs and professions – from electricians, firefighters, A&E doctors, cleaners and homemakers. It would appear that the main focus of the book is the job that is being done, rather than the person who is doing it. This is a radical shift, as often the focus is on how a person applies their faith to a job.

Sloten argues that every job is created by God (it is unclear if the people that he has spoken to are followers of Christ) – e.g. the purpose of a lawyer is to stand up for justice, the purpose of a teacher is to provide education, the purpose of a cleaner is to provide a healthy, clean environment and so forth. When these jobs are carried out as they should be, Christ can be seen. Therefore, the question that is posed is how do we interact with these God-given roles? There is a logic to the flow of his argument but it is a logic that not everyone may agree with.

This is an easy-to-read, practical book with application questions at the end of each chapter. It is thought-provoking and challenging as to how we normally view our jobs.

RS



Campus Lights

Luke Cawley

MUDDY PEARL

£14.17 (Amazon)



"You are the light of the world" says Jesus to his followers in Matthew chapter five. Luke Cawley's *Campus Lights* examines, through stories and Scripture, how Jesus' words continue to unfold in the lives of believers on university campuses around the world today.

Campus Lights is a wonderful book that will be of particular encouragement to readers who have come from a university background and who have been blessed through the work of Christian Unions and other similar student movements. That being said, it's a book that will both excite and challenge any reader as the author highlights the work and mission of a great many inspirational, passionate, and courageous people from all over the world.

Cawley uses each chapter to unpack some of what he sees as the core aspects of work among students – justice, evangelism, leadership development, engaging the local context, and good stewardship of resources. The author has put a tremendous amount of work into gathering stories from all around the globe that speak into each of these areas. Sandwiched between each of these stories is an examination of the teachings of the Lord Jesus that underpins each core aspect.

Cawley's storytelling style makes this book particularly easy to engage with. Readers will find themselves feeling like they are sitting in a room with students, student workers, and graduates from Indonesia, Guatemala, Mongolia, Romania and many more as the author shares their testimony of life, work and mission on campuses all around the world.

JD

REVIEWERS

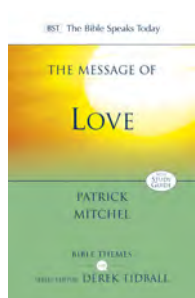
RS – Rick Scott works in the IT sector. He is an elder in West Presbyterian Church, Bangor.

AS – Amelia Skinner goes to Kirkpatrick Memorial Presbyterian, she is a big sister and P6 pupil.

JD – James Diffin works for the Church of Ireland and Methodist chaplaincy at Queen's University and worships in Wellington Presbyterian, Ballymena.

LS – Lisa Skinner is an administrative officer for the *Presbyterian Herald*.

JC – Rev Jim Campbell is minister emeritus of Cooke Centenary.



The Message of Love

Dr Patrick Mitchel

INTER-VARSITY PRESS

£9.98 (Amazon)



'A string of pearls' – this is perhaps the best description of Patrick Mitchel's book. It is part of the Inter-Varsity Press series 'The Bible Speaks Today'. It is one of a number of books on various themes that run throughout the whole of Scripture.

This book, which is a profound and complex study of love as spoken of in Scripture, consists of 17 chapters, each of which is an outstanding exegesis of a particular extended passage of the Bible. These are grouped together in four sections: love in the Old Testament; the love of God revealed in the mission and death of Jesus Christ; love in the life and teaching of Jesus; and the church as a community of love.

Each chapter is a real 'pearl' offering a detailed in-depth study which yields precious and fresh insights into the teaching of Scripture. This is the book's strength but also its weakness. The chapters, while uniformly good, are very much stand-alone studies and this can make the book rather frustrating to read. Also, because the book consists of 17 studies of specific passages there is the feeling that there are other passages of Scripture that also deserve equal consideration.

Nevertheless, there is much to be gained by working through this series of studies. However, Mitchel reminds his readers that in the end our task is not only to understand and articulate what love is but also to show it in our lives. "The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love" (Galatians 5:6).

JC



DVD

The Pilgrim's Progress

FATHOM EVENTS

2019



The book *The Pilgrim's Progress* has been translated into over 200 languages, has never been out of print and has sold over 200 million copies – more copies than any Christian book, next to the Bible.

Written in 1678 by John Bunyan while in prison for holding religious services, *The Pilgrim's Progress* is often cited as the greatest allegory ever written. Transforming this 17th-century allegory of the Christian life into a modern family-friendly animated feature was never going to be an easy task. Many of us will know and have enjoyed reading *The Pilgrim's Progress* but no doubt we did so as adults, or older teens at the very least. The ideas contained within this classic are fairly abstract and mature concepts for children to grasp so much of this film was lost on my younger children and it required some unpacking with my nine-year-old.

For those unfamiliar with the story, after a man goes missing from the City of Destruction, another resident named Pilgrim discovers his book, the more he reads it the more he is convicted of sin and judgment and a burden begins to develop on his back. Driven by his desire to discover the truth, Christian escapes from the town also and ventures outside the forbidden borders, beginning his journey to the Celestial City ruled by a good and noble king. His journey, fraught with temptation and danger, takes some diversions along the way and on it he meets both friend and foes, including a Christ-like figure named

Evangelist, voiced by John Rhys-Davies.

Kristyn Getty the well-known hymn writer and worship singer from Northern Ireland, voices the role of the Interpreter. Indeed, the film was exclusively screened at the Getty's 2019 Sing! conference. It was certainly a nice change to hear a familiar twang in with the mix of characters of an animated adventure. Audiences may also enjoy Kristyn's special introduction message on the importance of inspiring the imagination of children in building their faith.

Without doubt, in recent years faith-based films have seen a rise in popularity and proven to be an effective tool for sharing the essential truths of Christianity worldwide. This was certainly the intention of director Robert Fernandez when it came to this classic story. He believes it will resonate with non-believers as much believers because of the entertainment value of the film and because it is about the human experience, made different only by God's presence with us on our pilgrimage.

The animation of this movie is not quite on the same level as a Pixar feature but this production was partly crowdfunded so given the limited budget the visuals are good considering.

Although the movie was attributed a PG rating, younger children may find some scenes frightening. The film has been likened to an animated version of *The Lord of the Rings* and certainly in the scenes with the demons this rings true.

The Pilgrim's Progress has definitely stood the test of time and it is exciting to see it being shared in a new way for a new generation. Because this movie is full of symbolism it many take a few viewings for children to catch the meaning behind characters, places and obstacles. Nevertheless, I was encouraged that the message my eldest child took from the movie was that it is good to stay on the straight yet narrow path and that living as a Christian will be hard journey. It's certainly not a case of come to Christ and everything will be ok, it will take courage to walk that path in a culture that often stands against our message.

LS

Cregagh steps back in time

Cregagh Presbyterian Church in Belfast stepped back in time recently to hold an 'olde tyme' psalm service.

Exclusive psalmody is the singing in Christian worship of only metrical psalms, and was the universal Presbyterian and Calvinist practice in the English and French-speaking world from the 16th to the mid 19th century.

Led by the choir under the direction of choirmaster and organist John Dallas, Cregagh decided to embrace this form of worship during a dedicated Sunday service. A precentor was not used to sing the first line of the psalm, instead the choirmaster gave a single note to the choir from a mouth organ to raise the singing.

The minister Rev Edward McKenzie, choir and many in the congregation also entered into the 'olde tyme' theme by dressing up in Victorian or Edwardian style.

The choir sang Psalm 95, *O Come and Let Us to the Lord*, as an introit and then the congregation and choir sang Psalm 100, *All People That on Earth Do Dwell*; Psalm 92, *To Render Thanks unto the Lord*; Psalm 117, *O All Ye Nations of the Earth Give Praise unto the Lord*; Psalm 121, *I to the Hills Will Lift Mine Eyes*; Psalm 67, *Lord Bless and Pity Us*; and Psalm 98, *Sing a New Song to Jehovah*. The choir sang Psalm 23, *The Lord's My Shepherd, I'll Not Want* as the anthem.

The service was well received by the congregation, but the stress of getting that first note drove the choirmaster to say he is relieved to be playing the organ on the other 51 Sundays in the year.



Top left: The children from KidZone dressed up for the occasion of the 'olde tyme' psalm service in Cregagh.



Top right: The manse family.

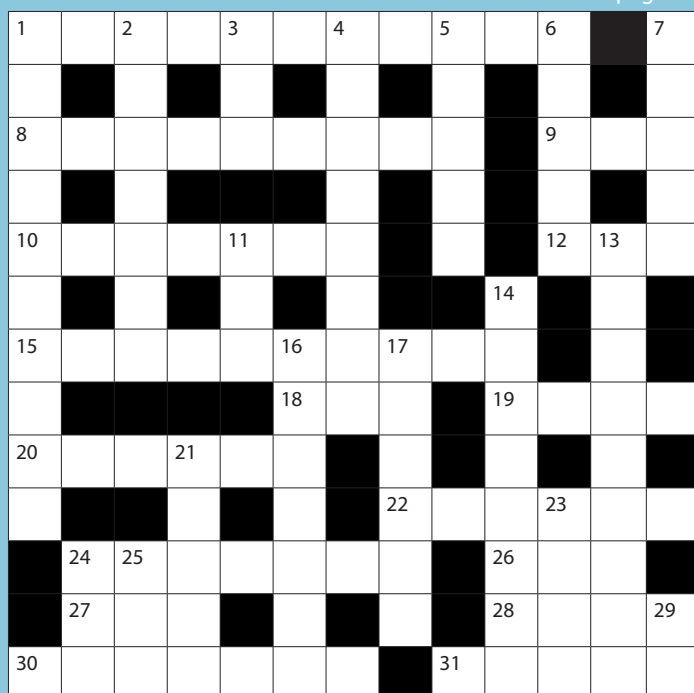
Below: The congregation and church choir.



CROSSWORD

Puzzle no 260

solution on page 53



compiled by Harry Douglas

ACROSS

- 1 Comradeship (11)
- 8 Springtime confectionary (6, 3)
- 9 Also known as (3)
- 10 Lee Child's hero (7)
- 12 Expressing mild disapproval (3)
- 15 Below (10)
- 18 Bishop's golden globe (3)
- 19 This is not odd (4)
- 20 Home of H.M.S. Belfast (6)
- 22 Wet and icy underfoot (6)
- 24 Sleepless US city? (7)
- 26 Large choking reptile (3)
- 27 You might sit here on the Lord's day (3)
- 28 Scottish isle (4)
- 30 Another name for race course (7)
- 31 Anagram of civilised animal (5)

DOWN

- 1 God wants us to give in this manner (10)
- 2 Yellow condiment (7)
- 3 Northern Irish river (3)
- 4 Duller of two (8)
- 5 Ending a radio message (5)
- 6 To worship (5)
- 7 Do not harden this vital organ (5)
- 11 One of Charlton Heston's biggest roles. Ben? (3)
- 13 Sneaky (9)
- 14 Angel by another name (8)
- 16 Perpetual movement (3-4)
- 17 Mistreatments (6)
- 21 Slow mode of speech (5)
- 23 This blackens Santa's beard (4)
- 24 Water leisure resort (3)
- 25 Slippery fish (3)
- 29 Call them if your car breaks (ints) (2)



New minister in Castlewellan and Leitrim

A new chapter began in the Co Down Presbyterian congregations of Castlewellan and Leitrim when Andy Downey was ordained and installed as minister. Pictured are: Desmond Wilson (clerk of session of Castlewellan Presbyterian), Claire Downey with children Elisa and James, Rev Downey and Drew Harte (clerk of session, Leitrim). *Photograph by John Smyth.*



Ordination of elders in First Armagh

Melanie Houston and Florence Megaw have been ordained as elders in First Armagh Presbyterian. They are pictured with Sadie Somerville, Rev Joanne Smith (preacher), Rev Tony Davidson (minister), Rev Simon Hamilton (presbytery moderator), Gordon Frazer, Rev Peter Gamble (clerk) and Kenny Moffett.



Retirement in Redrock

William Kelly recently received a gift from the congregation to mark his retirement after 19 years as clerk of session at Redrock Presbyterian Church in Co Armagh. Pictured are: Rev Sam Finlay (minister of Redrock), Mr Kelly, Norah Kelly and Arnold Black (the new clerk of session).



Retirement in Banagher

Jeffrey Baird has retired as congregational secretary after 25 years' service in Banagher Presbyterian Church. He is pictured with Rev Ashley Graham (minister of the Co Londonderry church) and Ivan Montgomery, who is retiring as treasurer after 28 years' service.



Retirements in Bessbrook

A presentation was made recently at Bessbrook Presbyterian Church to Danny and Karen Kennedy who have retired as Sunday school superintendent and teacher respectively after many years of service. A specially made summer seat was presented to the couple. Also pictured are the new superintendent Evelyn Brown, Annette McIntyre and Hannah Kennedy, children of the Sunday School and Rev Keith McIntyre (minister of the Co Armagh church).



Retirement marked in Ebrington

The retirement of Rosemary Rettie as a missionary working for Africa Inland Mission (AIM) was marked in Ebrington Presbyterian Church recently. In 1985 the Londonderry church commissioned the then Rosemary Walker to commence her service with AIM in Kenya. Whilst serving with AIM, she met her future husband Bill Rettie, who was serving with AIM amongst the tribes in the Kerio Valley in a village called Cheptebo. Following their marriage, she went to serve with him in Cheptebo and they both eventually ended their service with AIM based in the administrative headquarters in Nottingham. Following her retirement, she was presented with a bowl to commemorate her period of service. Pictured are: Mr Rettie, Mrs Rettie and Uel Harvey (secretary and treasurer of Ebrington Missionary Support Committee).



100th birthday in Whiteabbey

May McCracken, from Whiteabbey Presbyterian, celebrated her 100th birthday recently. The occasion was marked by a visit from PCI Moderator Dr William Henry, Councillor Maureen Morrow (mayor of Mid and East Antrim Council) and Whiteabbey minister Rev Angus Stewart.



Anniversary in Donaghmore and Glascar

A presentation was recently made to Rev Raymond McKibbin, marking his 10th anniversary at Donaghmore and Glascar Presbyterian churches in Co Down. Presentations were made by May Allen for Glascar and Moyra Smith for Donaghmore. They are pictured with kirk session members from both churches. *Photograph by Lloyd Toal.*



New elder in Raphoe and Ballindrait

Margaret McKnight has been ordained into the eldership of Raphoe and Ballindrait Presbyterian Church. She is pictured with Dr Brian Brown (minister of the Co Donegal church), Rev Colin McKibbin (moderator of presbytery), Dr Robert Buick (minister emeritus of Carlisle Road and Crossroads), Norman Witherow and George Hunter (both elders of Raphoe and Ballindrait).



Long service recognised in Raffrey

Rev Brian Small presented a gift to Nessie Moore in recognition of her 70 years of service to Raffrey Presbyterian church choir in Co Down. The gift was presented at a choir outing to the Potting Shed, Comber.



New elder in Letterkenny

John Elliott has been ordained and installed as a ruling elder in Trinity Presbyterian Church, Letterkenny. Seated are: Rev Colin McKibbin (moderator of presbytery), Mr Elliott, Rev Tommy Bruce (minister of Trinity Letterkenny) and Mauric Wray (clerk of session, Trinity). In the back row are Trinity elders: Ken Baxter, Myrtle Smyth, Noel Robb, Maureen McKeeman, James Grier, Eileen Corry and Aubrey Kee. *Photograph by Clive Wasson.*



Moderator at Iveagh elders' meeting

PCI Moderator, Dr William Henry, was the guest speaker at the recent Iveagh Presbytery Ruling Elders' meeting which was held in Bannside Presbyterian Church, Banbridge. He is pictured with officers of Iveagh Ruling Elders. Sitting: Raymond Adams, Dr Henry and David Peters. Standing: John Heenan, William Cochrane and Rev Adrian Moffett. *Photograph by Billy Maxwell, Katesbridge.*



Long service marked in Dungannon

A presentation took place in Dungannon Presbyterian Church recently to recognise the long service of elder Vera Cowan. Mrs Cowan has been an elder for 25 years, a PW member for 53 years and has also served as leader of the mums and tots group and Tearfund organiser for 12 years. Pictured are: David Miller (clerk of session), Dr Andrew Rodgers (minister emeritus), Mrs Cowan and Rev Alan Thompson (minister of the Co Tyrone church).



Praise service in Loughbrickland

Members of Loughbrickland Presbyterian church choir who took part in the songs of praise service organised by King Solomon's Rising Star RBP 402 which was held in the Co Down church recently. *Photograph by Billy Maxwell.*



Ordination in Co Antrim

John Brogan has been ordained and installed as minister of Glenarm and Cairnabana Presbyterian churches in Co Antrim. Pictured in the front row are: Brian Alexander (clerk of session, Cairnabana), Rev Joseph Andrews (clerk of presbytery), Rev Brogan, Rev William Moody (moderator of presbytery), Rev Ronnie Agnew (vacancy convener) and David Preston (interim clerk of session, Glenarm). Members of Ballymena commission are in the back row.



Minister installed in Newry churches

Jamie Maguire has been ordained and installed as the new minister of First Drumbanagher First and Jerrettspass, and Kingsmills Presbyterian churches. Pictured are: George Moffett (clerk of session, Drumbanagher and Jerrettspass), Joel Maguire, Kate Maguire, Toby Maguire, Rev Maguire, Raymond McCormick (clerk of session, Kingsmills). Back row: Robert Harpur, Bobby Hamilton and Roy Harpur (elders in Kingsmills). *Photograph courtesy of the Newry Reporter.*



Fun day at Downshire Road

PCI Moderator, Dr William Henry, attended a church fun day and officially opened and dedicated a new kitchen and extension at Downshire Road Presbyterian Church, Newry recently. He is pictured with Rev Brian Colvin (minister of the congregation) and members of kirk session.



Long Service in Craigavon

Alex Simms marked 40 years' service as a founding elder of Craigavon Presbyterian Church, while Carl Todd marked 17 years' service. Both have become elder emeriti of Armagh Presbytery. Pictured are: Mr Todd, Stan Hadden (clerk of session), Jennifer Todd, Rev Lachlan Webster, Mr Simms and Elsie Simms.



100th birthday in First Magherafelt

First Magherafelt member Maud Johnston celebrated her birthday recently. She is pictured with Dr Jonathan Curry (minister of the Co Londonderry church) and PCI Moderator, Dr William Henry.



New elders in Elmwood

Five new elders have been ordained in Elmwood Presbyterian in Lisburn. Pictured in the back row are: Rev Andrew Thompson (minister), Gareth Connolly, Mark Donnell, Colin Campbell and Mark Noble (clerk of session). Front row: Helen Johnston, Rev Kenny Hanna (moderator of Dromore Presbytery) and Ronnie Nesbitt.

Attention PW Groups

Looking for speakers for next session?

Why not consider The Smiles Foundation, a registered charity, motivated by deep Christian commitment to work among the poor and vulnerable in Romania.

Thank you to so many of you who pray, give or have gone on Smiles Mission Trips.

To arrange a local speaker for your group, contact:

Anne Kane – Ballymoney
07742 324817
aekane@hotmail.co.uk

Adrian Pogue – Ballymena
07709 578950
adrian.pogue@thesmilesfoundation.org



Charity No 1087961

The Smiles Foundation,
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Leeds LS11 6YR
T: 0113-276-5060
E: info@thesmilesfoundation.org
W: www.thesmilesfoundation.org



We are a rural church family, just outside Ballymena, seeking to appoint a

Music Coordinator

(part-time, 8 hours per week)

We are looking for an enthusiastic individual to help lead and develop our corporate praise

For further details, job description and application form please contact:

Rev Alistair McCracken
304 Cushendall Road, Ballymena, BT43 6PS
Telephone: (028) 2565 7531
Email: amccracken123@gmail.com

The closing date for applications is Friday 24 April 2020

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SEEKS TO APPOINT A MUSIC DIRECTOR

Garnerville is looking for a dynamic and enthusiastic individual to lead and develop our church choir, band and congregation in the worship and praise of God.

This is a permanent and salaried position that involves a commitment of five hours per week.

Further details and an application form are available from
Rev Jonny Frazer: jwfrazer@presbyterianireland.org

The closing date for applications is Friday 1 May



15-19 Ballymoney Road, Ballymena, Co Antrim, BT43 5BS
Tel: (028) 2564 8327

seeks to appoint a

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(12 hours/week)

The Pastoral Visitor's duties will include maintaining an up-to-date list of our senior members and visiting them on a regular basis as well as sharing with the ministry team in providing them with hospital and bereavement pastoral care. They will also include supporting existing programmes for our senior members.

Salary £6,500 per annum

A full job description etc. and application forms can be downloaded from the church website at
www.westchurchballymena.org

or obtained from:

Rev Daniel Kane, 6 Old Galgorm Manor,
Ballymena, BT42 1RY
Email: danielkane2109@btinternet.com
Telephone: (028) 2565 3111

Closing date for applications: Friday 1 May 2020.

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CHURCH RECORD

VACANT CONGREGATIONS, MODERATORS AND CLERKS OF KIRK SESSIONS

(Information supplied by Clerks of Presbyteries, Conveners of Assembly Commissions and Councils).

1 LEAVE TO CALL GRANTED

Application forms are available on request from the Clerk's Office or may be downloaded from the PCI website.

BALLYHOBIDGE, CLONES, NEWBLISS and STONEBRIDGE: (Part-time 50%, Reviewable Tenure – 7 years)

REV STEPHEN McNIE: (Ballyhobridge) Mr David Jordan, Drumboghamagh, Newtownbutler, BT92 8LL. (Clones) Mr Tom Elliott, Bellmount, Newtownbutler, BT92 6LT. (Newbliss) Mr Thomas McConkey, Killyfuddy, Newbliss, Co Monaghan. (Stonebridge) Mr Gerald Mackarel, Roughfort, Clones, Co Monaghan.

BALLYCARRY:

REV H.M. RENDELL: Miss Daphne Bashford, 36 Island Road, Ballycarry, Carrickfergus, BT38 9JE.

BALLYCLARE:

REV P.A. BOVILL: Mr Niall McConkey, 30 Village Green, Doagh, Ballyclare, BT39 0UD.

BANGOR, HAMILTON ROAD:

VERY REV DR R.A. PATTON: Mr Tom Clarke, 85 Churchill Park, Bangor, BT20 5RW.

DONEGORE, SECOND: (Part-time 70%, Reviewable Tenure – 5 years)

REV JONATHAN BOYD: Mr Samuel Gawn, 120 Parkgate Road, Kells, Ballymena, BT42 3PQ.

CAIRNCastle: (Reviewable Tenure – 7 years)

REV R.I. CARTON: Mr Cowper Lynas, 2 Croft Heights, Ballygally, Larne, BT40 2QS.

CARROWDORE & BALLYFRENIS and BALLYBLACK:

REV J.P. McWATTERS: (Carrowdore & Ballyfrenis) Mr Herbert Robinson, 9 Islandhill Road, Millisle, BT22 2BS. (Ballyblack) Mr Alex Warden, 92 Bowtown Road, Newtownards, BT23 8SL.

COAGH, BALLYGONEY and SALTERSLAND:

REV G.J. JORDAN: (Coagh) Mrs Amy Allingham, 17 Coagh Road, Cookstown, BT80 8RL. (Ballygoney) Mr Bruce Johnston, 4 Mill Road, Old Coagh Road, Cookstown, BT80 0NE. (Salterland) Mr Matt Hyndman, 4 Brennan Court, Castledawson Road, Magherafelt, BT45 6AT.

COOKSTOWN, FIRST:

REV W.A. DICKEY: Mr Gordon Black, 21 The Dales, Cookstown, BT80 8TF.

GILFORD and TULLYLISH: (Reviewable Tenure – 7 years)

REV T.A. CONWAY: (Gilford) Mr Paul Cochrane, Stramore Road, Gilford, Craigavon. (Tullylish) Mr John McCullagh, 2 Old Bann Road, Gilford, Craigavon, BT63 6DZ.

HOLYWOOD, FIRST:

REV N.D. CRAIG: Mr Craig Russell, 7 Bangor Road, Holywood. BT18 0NU.

KILFENNAN:

REV GRAEME ORR: Mr Will Doran, 2 Moulton Park, Eglinton, BT47 3XP.

PORTSTEWART:

REV R.J. COLLINS: Mr Peter O'Neill, 3 Henry O'Neill Heights, Portstewart, BT55 7UD.

RAMELTON and KILMACRENNAN:

REV C.M. WILSON: (Ramelton) Mr David Armour, Loughnagin, Letterkenny, Co Donegal. (Kilmacrennan) Mr Nathaniel Rogers, Gortnavern, Coolboy, Letterkenny, Co Donegal.

TOBERMORE & DRAPERSTOWN: (Part-time 50%, Reviewable Tenure – 5 years)

REV DR J.A. CURRY: Mr Gordon Dickson Jnr, 7 Strawmore Road, Draperstown, BT45 7JE.

2 LEAVE TO CALL DEFERRED

GORTNESSY:

REV J.S. McCREA: Mr Ross Hyndman, 32 Temple Road, Strathfoyle, Londonderry, BT47 6UB.

RICHVIEW:

REV N.S. HARRISON: Mr Victor Garland, 25 Abingdon Drive, Belfast, BT12 5PX.

SETTLED STATED SUPPLY APPOINTED

BALLINDERRY:

RT REV DR W.J. HENRY, Minister of Maze

BOVEEDY:

REV DR T.J. McCORMICK, Minister of 1st Kilrea

CAHIR:

REV WILLIAM MONTGOMERY, Minister of Fermoy

KATESBRIDGE:

REV N.J. KANE, Minister of Magherally

KILREA, SECOND:

REV S.A. MORROW, Minister of Moneydig

TYRONE'S DITCHES:

REV J.K.A. McINTYRE, Minister of Bessbrook

3 DECLARED VACANT

ANAHILT and DRUMLOUGH:

REV L.A. PATTERSON: (Anahilt) Mr Laurence Hook, 10 Spirehill Road, Hillsborough, BT26 6LU. (Drumlough) Mr David Gibson, 56 Drumaknockan Road, Hillsborough, BT26 6EU.

BALLYGOMARTIN:

REV I.K. McDONALD: Mr Raymond Cummings, 43A Lyndhurst Gardens, Belfast, BT13 3PH.

BALLYKELLY:

REV J.L. BLAIR: Mrs Doreen Nicholl, Shackleton Lodge, 8 Dukes Lane, Ballykelly, BT49 9JT.

BELVOIR:

REV B.J. McCROSKERY: Mr Brian Dunwoody, 19 Drumart Drive, Belfast, BT8 7ET.

BURT:

REV JAMES LAMONT: Mr James Buchanan, Heathfield, Speenoge, Burt, Co Donegal, F93 W3K6.

CARNDONAGH, GREENBANK, MALIN and MOVILLE:

REV DR DAVID LATIMER: (Carndonagh) Mr Tom Campbell, Carndonagh, Lifford, Co Donegal. (Malin) Mrs Barbara Smyth, Dunross, Culdaff, Co Donegal. (Moville) Mr Joseph McNeely, Rock House, Lecamey, Lifford, Co Donegal.

CARNLOUGH & CUSHENDALL and NEWTOWNCROMMELIN:

REV R.J. WATT: (Carnlough & Cushendall) Mr Norman McMullan, 91 Ballymena Road, Carnlough, Ballymena, BT44 0LA. (Newtowncrommelin) Mr James Gillan, 67 Gracefield, Ballymena, BT42 2RP.

CLOGHERNEY and SIXMILECROSS:

REV R.G. McELNEA: (Clogherney) Miss Ruth Kerr, 2 Georgian Villas, Omagh, BT79 0AT. (Sixmilecross) Mr Alan Gibson, 1 Dreenan Road, Beragh, Omagh, BT79 0SH.

CRUMLIN ROAD:

VERY REV DR T.N. HAMILTON: Mr James Coleman, 2 Abbeydale Parade, Belfast, BT14 7HJ.

DRUMACHOSE and DERRAMORE:

REV T.A.S. GRAHAM: (Drumachose) Mr Sam McGregor, 15 Meadowvale Park, Limavady, BT49 0NU. (Derramore) Mr Sam Kelly, 220 Windyhill Road, Coleraine, BT51 4JL.

DUNBOE, FIRST:

REV M.E. DONALD: Mr Peter Kirk, 5 Liffock Court, Castlerock, Coleraine, BT51 4DQ.

FAHAN and WATERSIDE:

REV G.A. McCracken: (Fahan) Mr James Lamberton, 1 Deanfield, Limavady Road, Londonderry, BT47 6HY. (Waterside) Mr William McIlwaine, 19 Glenaden Hill, Altnagelvin Park, Londonderry, BT47 2LJ.

FIRST DERRY (incl. CLAREMONT) and MONREAGH:

REV S.J. MOORE: (First Derry) Mr Billy Kyle, 74 Dunboyne Park, Eglinton, Londonderry, BT47 3YJ. (Monreagh) Mr John Vance, Cross, Carrigans, Lifford, Co Donegal, F93 PXT0.

Editor's Note: Information for this page is supplied by the General Secretary's Department. Vacancies for conveners of commissions, councils and committees of the General Assembly are online at www.presbyterianireland.org/convenerships

Clerks of presbytery please note: Only material received by the General Secretary's Department by the first Friday of the month can be included in the Church Record.

FISHERWICK:

REV D.J. GRAY: Mrs Linda Little, 9 Rosepark South, Belfast, BT5 7RJ.

INCH:

REV JAMES LAMONT: Mr James Buchanan, Heathfield, Speenoge, Burt, Co Donegal, F93 W3K6.

KELLS: (Home Mission)

REV ALAN McQUADE: Ms Ruth McCartney, Shancarnan, Moynalty, Kells, Co Meath. A82 PF60.

KILCOOLEY:

REV T.J. McCONAGHIE: Mrs Sylvia Ferguson, 4 Dermott Road, Comber, BT23 5LG.

KILKENNY:

REV WILLIAM MONTGOMERY: Mr John Ellis, Annamult, Stoneyford, Co Kilkenny.

LIMERICK, CHRIST CHURCH:

REV W.J. HAYES: Mr Brian Park, 19 Aylesbury, Clonmacken, Ennis Road, Limerick.

NEW MOSSLEY:

REV DR W.J.M. PARKER: Mr Howard Keery, 16 Earlford Heights, Mossley, Newtownabbey, BT36 5WZ.

NEWINGTON:

REV DR I.D. NEISH: Mr John Lyness, 8 Bushfoot Park, Portballintrae, BT57 8YX.

NEWTOWNSTEWART and GORTIN:

REV R.B. THOMPSON: (Newtownstewart) Mr James Baxter, 22 Strabane Road, Newtownstewart, Omagh, BT78 4BD (Gortin) Mr Adrian Adams, 32 Lisnaharney Road, Lislap, Omagh, BT79 7UE.

PORTAVOGIE:

REV G.J. SIMPSON: Mr Trevor Kennedy, 1 Cairndore Road, Newtownards, BT23 8RD.

RALOO and MAGHERAMORNE:

REV DR. C.A. GRANT: (Raloo) Mr Geoff McBride, 72 Raloo Road, Larne, BT40 3DU. (Magheramorne) Mr Morris Gardner, 89 Ballypollard Road, Magheramorne, Larne, BT40 3JG.

VINECASH:

REV P.W.A. McCLELLAND: Mr Thomas Graham, 38 Richmount, Portadown, BT62 4JQ.

TEMPORARY STATED SUPPLY ARRANGEMENT

ARMOY and RAMOAN:

REV NOEL McCLEAN: (Armoey) Mrs Ann Campbell, 77B Bregagh Road, Armoey, Ballymoney, BT53 8TP. (Ramoan) Mr Robert Getty, 23 Carrowcroey Road, Armoey, Ballymoney, BT53 8UH.

BALLYCAIRN:

REV WILLIAM HARKNESS: Mr Brian Milligan, 19 Glenariff Drive, Dunmurry, BT17 9AZ.

BELLVILLE:

REV D.S. HENRY: Mr Mervyn King, 29 Ardmore Road, Derryadd, Lurgan, BT66 6QP.

DERVOCK:

REV R.M. MOODY: Mr John Surgenor, 82 Toberdoney Road, Dervock, Ballymoney, BT53 8DH.

RYANS and BROOKVALE:

REV F.J. GIBSON: (Ryans) Miss Nora Hamilton, Rathfriland Manor Nursing Home, Rossconor Terrace, Rathfriland, BT34 5DJ. (Brookvale) Mr Norman McCrum, 49 Ballynamagna Road, Rathfriland, Newry, BT34 5PA.

WARRENPOINT and ROSTREVOR:

REV S.S. JOHNSTON: (Warrenpoint) Mr Denis Brady, 28 Seaview, Warrenpoint, Newry, BT34 3NJ. (Rostrevor) Mr Terry O'Flynn, 15 Aurora Na Mara, Shore Road, Rostrevor, BT34 3UP.

THE ELDERSHIP

Ordained & Installed:

BUSHMILLS: Doreen Armstrong, Hilary Taggart, Una Summers, Heather Howell, Ruth Lavery, Elizabeth Houston

Installed:

BUSHMILLS: Martin Gracey, James Clarke

Died:

AHOUGHILL, TRINITY: James Alexander Moore McCloy

BALLYMENA, HIGH KIRK: Douglas Gaston

CARNMONEY: Gordon Lynn

EGLINTON: Jack Moore

THE MINISTRY

Died:

Rev Samuel Watson McClintock, Minister Emeritus of Kilbride, on 19 February 2020

Rev Joseph Buchanan Mooney, Minister Emeritus of Grange, on 28 February 2020

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CLASSIFIEDS

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CATERING: Heading to or from the North Coast? Ballyclare Presbyterian is in an ideal location for morning coffees, lunch or high tea. For more information contact Margaret on 07521 888365.

SLIGO PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH will be delighted to cater for groups coming to visit Sligo, Mullaghmore, Drumcliffe and surrounding areas of interest on the Wild Atlantic Way. Morning coffee, brunch, lunch, afternoon tea, high tea provided. Contact Fiona 00353 871014058.

CARLAND PW AVAILABLE to cater for groups. Situated between Cookstown and Dungannon, we would be delighted to welcome you. For further information contact: Jennifer Morrow 028 87761678 or Gillian Brownlow 028 87748643.

THE LADIES OF First Randalstown PW are willing to cater for groups during May and June. Morning coffee or afternoon tea. Convenient to A26 for the North Coast or Antrim Castle Gardens. Contact Nadine 07883 834810 or June 028 94472046.

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Second Randalstown Presbyterian Church

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Salary: Presbyterian Church in Ireland Salary Scale Band A (£19,059-£22,671 p.a.) pro rata (salary negotiable depending on experience).

The applicant should be a spiritually mature person with previous experience working with children and families.

This post requires evening and weekend work on a regular basis. Further information and a full job description and application form can be obtained from

Dr Gordon McIlroy Tel: (028) 9447 3931
Email: gordon.mcilroy@btinternet.com

Closing date for applications: 10 April 2020

Ballyloughan Presbyterian Church, Ballymena

is seeking to appoint a

Youth and Community Worker (25 hours per week)

The person appointed will have a key role in equipping, supporting and developing our youth work in the church and local community.

Further details, job description and application form available from

Rev Darran McCorriston
dmccorriston@presbyterianireland.org
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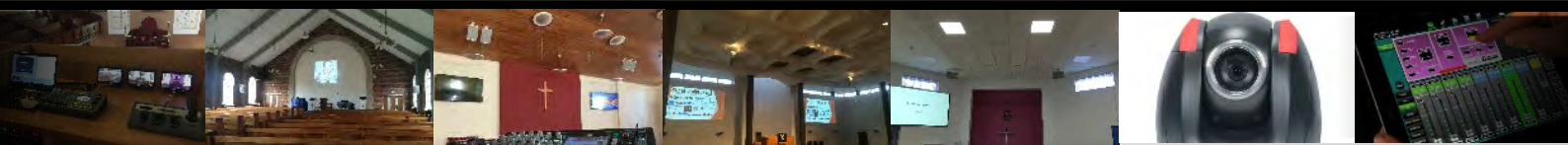
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