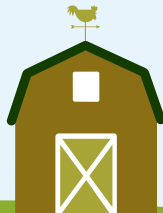
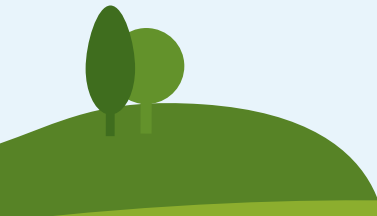




Presbyterian Church in Ireland

Balmoral Show 2017



Taking stock

P2

**Looking for a
church? P4**

**Supporting farming
families P6**

Taking stock

Clip. Snip. Trim. Brush. These are the sounds you may have heard on livestock farms across the island in recent days. The sounds and smells of the beauty salon have been wafting through farm sheds as sheep, cattle, pigs and horses receive beauty treatments. People have been painstakingly preparing their animals so that they will look their best for the Balmoral Show.

In the Bible, Jesus explains that He has come to be the perfect stockman, our Good Shepherd. This is good news for us, because we are like straying sheep. Our straying away from God is serious. The Bible calls it “sin”. We instinctively don’t like the word sin and we are right. As it describes how we have turned our back on our loving Good Shepherd and treated Him in such a terrible way.

When sheep stray away from the shepherd, it may seem like they are free. But, because we have been created to be part of Jesus’ flock, straying away from our Good Shepherd ultimately leads to loneliness, emptiness and a sense that there is no real purpose to life. In fact, because God is just and fair, if we continue to stay away from Him He will give us exactly what we ask for: separation from Him and all His good gifts, forever.



Incredibly, because Jesus is the GOOD Shepherd, He doesn't just abandon straying, rebellious sheep, even though that's exactly what we deserve. Instead, Jesus the Good Shepherd goes out looking for us. Jesus sums up His love for us like this: "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (John 10:11). Jesus has become our substitute, taking God's punishment for our sin, so that God can justly forgive us and welcome us into His flock forever.

What now?

If you realise that straying away from the Good Shepherd is something you need to sort out now, here is a prayer you can pray: *"Father, I admit that I have strayed away from you and gone my own way. But I thank you that you have sent your Son Jesus, to be my Good Shepherd and bring me back to you. Thank you that Jesus died on the cross, so that I can be forgiven. So please forgive me. Help me, from now on, to turn from living for myself and to faithfully follow Jesus as my Good Shepherd. In Jesus' name I pray, amen."*

What next?

When God forgives you, you become part of His flock. It is vital for you to meet with Jesus' followers, who will help you as you begin this new life. The link below will help you find a Presbyterian Church in Ireland congregation near you. Start reading the Bible each day and talking to God in prayer. This will help you grow closer to God. Now that you have become part of His flock, God will help you to tell others that Jesus is your Good Shepherd.

www.presbyterianireland.org/findachurch



Looking for a church?

There are 545 Presbyterian congregations, north and south.

Who we are:

The name Presbyterian comes from the Greek word for elder. Elders are elected by each local congregation to make important decisions in the church.

What we believe:

The Bible is true

All of the Bible is there for our good, to point us to Jesus and help us live for Him.

Our lives are messed up

We naturally want to go our own way, instead of God's way. The Bible calls this rebellion against God "sin". Our sin means that we can't reach God ourselves, not even by our best efforts.

God is in control / king

We believe that there's only one God, whom the Bible describes as King. He is in charge of everyone and everything, all the time. As a loving king, He wants the best for us.

The cross is central

Jesus' death on the cross is the Bible's central message. If God is so perfect, and our sin is so bad that we can't come to God by ourselves, the great news is that Jesus died to sort out our mess. Jesus explains that His death is like paying a ransom: when we trust Him we are set free from sin, to live for Him.



More about who we are...

240K
members

473

Social care bed spaces each night*

"It's great that the Presbyterian Church is willing to reach out to people who feel rejected by society..."

"We have the privilege to get alongside such people, to pray with them and go the extra mile with them."

32K
volunteer leaders

33
missionaries
in 11
countries

"I'm inspired to step out of the church building as a believer and follower of Jesus."

* includes spaces for care for the elderly, respite care, ex-offenders, rehab, learning disabled and students.



Supporting farming families

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland wants to reassure all farmers and their families of our ongoing pastoral and prayerful support. We are aware that farming families face many challenges: outside pressures such as Brexit or needs closer to home such as loneliness, isolation and financial stress.

This leaflet is produced by the Presbyterian Church in Ireland with the prayerful desire that it would signpost farming families and the wider rural community to help that is available.



There are a number of places you can go for help and support when times are hard

Firstly, it's good to talk. We would encourage you to talk through how you feel with another member of your family, maybe a close and trusted friend, or your doctor.

Your **local minister** will always be ready and willing to listen in confidence and offer prayerful support and friendship.

A directory of ministers in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland is available at www.presbyterianireland.org/findachurch

Ulster Farmers' Union

We would strongly encourage you to attend local UFU Focus on the Family and other events in your area.

W. www.ufuni.org **T.** +44 (0)28 9037 0222

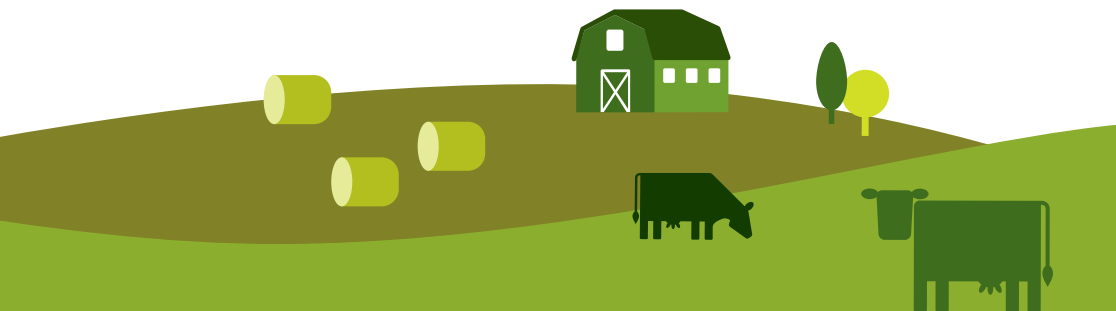
Rural Support

An organisation that can listen, advise, offer face-to-face support and help you source information.

W. www.ruralsupport.org.uk **T.** 0845 6067607

God's Word

The Bible is full of wonderful assurances and promises not only for this life, but for the life to come. To experience these, each of us needs to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God and accept Him as our Lord and Saviour.



One man's story

Jim McConnell – Farmer, Rathfriland, Co. Down

As a child helping his mum collect eggs before school, Jim never wanted to do anything else but farm. He answered a few questions for us.

How long have you been farming?

When I married Janet 50 years ago we bought five acres. From that, we have built up the pig, poultry and cereal farm we have now.

You're a Christian, what difference does it make to you as a farmer?

Through the prayers of a great aunt and a mission in town, I trusted in Jesus Christ in 1959 at 13 years old. I have seen the Lord at work in my business dealings. I see and enjoy His work every day in the beauty of the world around me. Also I know His peace personally.

In 2012, you had a serious farm accident which meant you couldn't work for 18 months. How has that impacted your life?

I'm no longer able to do as much as I used to, but what happened has strengthened my faith in Jesus immeasurably. I know His peace in the midst of pain. Farming can be totally absorbing, excluding everything else. It can become your god. I'm really thankful for the Lord my God. He continues to have the biggest impact on my life.

Good news for the countryside

Look out for our fortnightly column in the News Letter's *Farming Life*. It is written by Presbyterians from a farming background or who have a heart for the countryside.

Farming Life



Assembly Buildings, 2-10 Fisherwick Place, Belfast BT1 6DW
Tel: +44 (0)28 9032 2284 Email: info@presbyterianireland.org
www.presbyterianireland.org

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC104483)
Registered Charity in the Republic of Ireland (20015695)