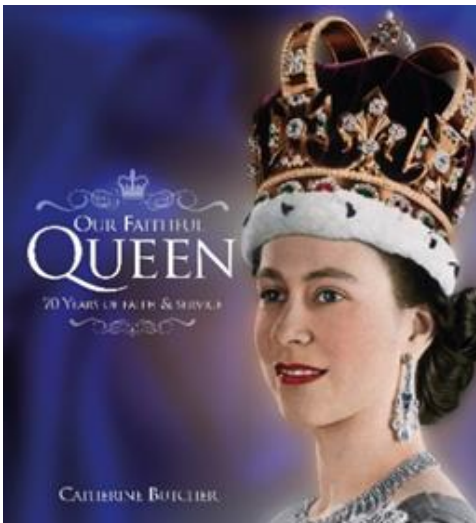


Minister:	Rev Michael Davidson	t: 02892 667010	e: mdavidson@presbyterianireland.org
Deaconess:	Heidi England	t: 	e: heidi@railwaystreet.org
Youth Worker:	Hannah Craig	t: 	e: hannah@railwaystreet.org
Church Office:	9.30am - 12.30pm	Tue/Wed/Thu	t: 028 9260 2766 e: office@railwaystreet.org

‘Our Faithful Queen’

Dear Friends,

There are many times when an event is not recognised to be historically significant until many years later as people look back. But every once in a while, you become aware that you are actually living through a truly historic moment – such as the moon landing in 1969 (I am too young to remember that one!) or the Fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. As we approach the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee, we are all aware that this is a truly historic moment. This is an event none of us will ever witness again and which in all likelihood will never happen again.



At the very beginning of her reign Queen Elizabeth II said, “I declare before you all that my whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service!” Happily, for her subjects, it has been a long life and she has reigned for 70 years. She has kept her promise to her people. She has shown over the course of those 70 years devoted and unwavering service. Her Platinum Jubilee marks an incredible milestone, and it is a privilege and a joy for us to be able to celebrate it with her.

The world has changed a lot over those 70 years, the United Kingdom has changed a lot too (and not always for the better) but through it all the Queen has been a constant and assuring presence and, I think, in many ways she is the glue that continues to hold the United Kingdom together.

Six months before her Coronation Princess Elizabeth asked the people of the United Kingdom and Commonwealth to, “pray that God may give me wisdom

and strength to carry out the solemn promises I shall be making and that I may faithfully serve Him and you, all the days of my life. “

It is very clear that God has answered those prayers and so on **Sunday 5th June**, as in churches all around the United Kingdom, we in Railway Street will hold a **special Thanksgiving Service at 10:30am**. We will be giving thanks to God for the Queen's 70 years of faithful service and recognising that He is the King to whom she bows the knee and whom she has sought to serve over those 70 years. Do join us in person if at all possible or online if you are not able to be with us.

But even 70 years is but a brief spell in the grand sweep of history and we are also conscious that the Queen, like all of us, is mortal. Sadly, for our nation there will come a day when her King will call her home, although we pray that He will be pleased to allow her to continue to reign over us for more years to come. We need to remember that all human kings and queens come and go, the kingdoms they reign over rise and fall – we have been learning this lesson in the book of Daniel on Sunday mornings.

There is only one immortal King and only one everlasting Kingdom. That King is the Lord Jesus Christ and His everlasting Kingdom is coming. As Daniel 7 says, “He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshipped Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away and His Kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.” (Daniel 7:14) Daniel assures us that the people who belong to this King will also inherit that eternal Kingdom.

We are proud to be subjects of Queen Elizabeth II and privileged to be living in these historic days and able to participate in this joyful occasion but how much more important it is that we ensure that we are citizens of that coming Kingdom, that everlasting Kingdom. To be sure that we are we need, like our Queen, to bow the knee and acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord and live our lives to serve Him just as she has done.

God save our gracious Queen and may that same God save us.

Yours in His service,

Michael Davidson

Services for June

5th June

10:30am - Queen's Platinum Jubilee
Thanksgiving Service



12th June

10:30am - Daniel 9:20-27 *'In It For The Long Haul'* - Michael Davidson
6:30pm - Exodus Team Commissioning

19th June

10:30am



26th June

10:30am - 1 Thessalonians 1 - *'What Does A Christian Look Like?'*
Rev Jamie Maguire
6:30pm – Communion - Rev Dr Marty Cowan

Watch online at www.railwaystreet.org

Telephone Line Service – 028 92448979

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

DEATH

It is with sadness we record the death of Mrs (Clara) Claire Warwick on 9th May. The congregation extends their sympathy and prayers to the family at this time of loss.

Thank You
FOR
GIVING
...
GENEROUSLY

We are very grateful to our church family for your very generous response on our Gift Day on 8th May. At the time of writing the total stands at £47,500 (including Gift Aid) and we say a sincere thank you for your ongoing support.

If you have not had the opportunity to give as yet, you can still do so by placing your gift in the offering plate at a Sunday service, delivering your gift to the usual addresses or by making a bank transfer to the Link Project Account (details provided in the May bulletin).



PRAYER FOCUS

Luke 11:1. "Lord, teach us to pray."

We thank God for His faithfulness and guidance throughout these last couple of years. We thank Him for a growing congregation as many families return to Sunday worship once more and many new families join our congregation. We trust that you all feel at home amongst us.

God calls us to pray and we invite you to join us as we obey His call. Prayer Focus is not for a select few but for everyone, young or old, who confess Jesus as Lord and King. Once more we invite you all to join with us for one hour of prayer on **Monday 20th June from 8.00 – 9.00 pm in No 31.**

CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEE MEETING will be held on **Monday 13th June** at 8pm.



All members of the congregation are invited to a **coffee morning on Thursday 9th June at 10.30am** in the main hall. **Diane Cusick**, a PCI Global Mission Worker, who is supported by PW, will be speaking about her work in Zambia.

PW June meeting will be held on **Monday 27th** entitled, *"Summer Surprise."* All ladies of the congregation are very welcome at 8.00pm in the Main Hall.

This month Michael and Hannah, along with members of Railway Street and Rebekah Ravey, the SU School's Worker, will be delivering 'It's Your Move' lessons for the P7s in Brownlee Primary and Wallace Prep. Please pray that these lessons might be a helpful starting point for more conversations about Jesus and would help P7s prepare well for making the transition to secondary school.



For our final meeting on **Thursday 30th June**, we will meet at Dobbies at 2 30pm for Afternoon Tea. The cost will be £7. 50 and if you would like to come, please book your place by ringing Helen [REDACTED] before Monday 26th June.

office@railwaystreet.org

KESWICK AT PORTSTEWART 2022

After an absence of two years Keswick at Portstewart resumes this summer, from **Saturday 9th to Friday 15th July**. **The theme this year will be "RENEWAL"**

Each morning, Monday to Friday at 11am, David Scott (Inshes Church, Inverness) will help us find renewal in the Lord through the book of Haggai.

The evening sessions, Saturday to Friday at 7.30pm will be led by Martin Salter (Grace Church, Bedford) and Glen Scrivener (Speak Life)

If you plan to be in the area during these dates, please drop in and share in Christian fellowship and learn from God's word.

A special message to families with children. Keswick works closely with **Portstewart CSSM** so your children can enjoy this wonderful experience and grow in their faith.



Link Progress update

We have now held our 9th site meeting and have received and paid the invoices for approved certificate number 7. Hopefully most of you have been able to keep up to date with progress by viewing the photos on the Church web page.

The building roof has now been completed and the upstairs flooring is also well underway. Fabrication of the stairs and the window manufacture is underway, so we expect the windows will be delivered and installed in the coming weeks.



Progress has also been made on the external, and some initial, stonework. Wall tracking and first fix electrics is underway in the hall and kitchen areas. There have also been numerous technical meetings and conference calls to discuss and address items and issues as necessary.

The finishes team have held a further meeting with 1080 to finalise our

furnishing requirements.

Thanks to everyone for their continued support.

Ivan

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2022



The 2022 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland will meet in Belfast from Wednesday, 22 June to Saturday, 25 June.



The General Assembly is the principal decision-making body of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and will formally **elect Rev John Kirkpatrick of Portrush Presbyterian Church in County Antrim** as Moderator of the General Assembly for 2022/2023 on its opening night.

Along with its primary focus on mission and ministry as part of the Church of Jesus Christ, the annual gathering is also an important time of coming together, of fellowship, worship, Bible study and celebration.

When the General Assembly last met in October 2021, members agreed **to recommendations that seek to make future meetings more accessible**. These included moving the Assembly to slightly later in June, opening on a Wednesday evening and working through until Saturday afternoon.

As the Clerk of the General Assembly, Rev Trevor Gribben, explains, “As a more familiar rhythm to our church life returns, I give thanks that our Presbyterian family can come together again in



full General Assembly this June, to worship, pray, and take decisions, just as we have done for generations.

“With civic dignitaries and representatives from overseas and partner churches also invited, along with PCI members who usually ‘sit and deliberate’, this year’s General Assembly will see the Opening Night take place on Wednesday evening 22 June. Closing on Saturday, 25th, business will be conducted on Thursday, along with the Evening Celebration, Friday until 9pm, and Saturday until teatime, enabling more people to take part,” Mr Gribben said.

“As we prepare to meet together in General Assembly, to wait upon the Lord and to seek His will as we make necessary decisions, please pray for this year’s meeting - and for the overall life, work and witness of our Church.”

The vast majority of its business will be open to the public, as are the worship services. You will also be able to follow events at this year’s Assembly [@pciassembly](#) on Twitter using the hashtag #pciga22 and [@pcimoderator](#). You will also be able to watch proceedings as it will be livestreamed.

Church Planting Conference

*A time
to plant*

Our minister was among upwards of 100 people from Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland interested in church planting, gathered in Dundalk, County Louth over the weekend for the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's (PCI) conference 'A time to plant'.



Keynote speaker Scotty Smith addressing the conference

Organised by PCI's Council for Mission in Ireland (CMI), which has specific responsibility for developing PCI's strategic priorities in all-age mission across Ireland, and new church development, was seeking to build on the denomination's long and rich history of planting new churches.

Rev Dr Marty McNeely, minister of Ballykeel Presbyterian Church, is co-convenor of CMI's Church

Planting Panel and was one of the speakers at Saturday's conference. "This one day conference was open to all within PCI who are interested in church planting. For me, and I hope everyone who attended on Saturday, it was a really inspiring and encouraging day. I am personally really excited about how God might use the event, prayerfully hoping that new expressions of church and Christian witness may take root as a result and those recently established by Presbyterians will flourish."

During the conference those attending heard from Presbyterians who are currently building new communities of faith. These include [Balbriggan in County Dublin](#), which began its weekly services in 2020, [Central in Belfast, which opened its doors in 2016](#), and another expression of Christian witness in North Belfast, [Grace and Hope Community](#)



Scotty Smith (centre) pictured with the co-conveners of the Church Planting Panel, Tom Gilliam, an elder in Maynooth Presbyterian Church (left) and Rev Dr Marty McNeely (right)

Church. Those involved spoke about their experiences, sense of call, the challenges and the joys of being part of something new.

They also heard from keynote speaker Scotty Smith, author and founding pastor of Christ Community Church in Franklin, Tennessee. Mr Smith pastored the church for 26 years, from which grew five 'daughter churches' and 10 subsequent 'granddaughter churches'.

Dr McNeely, whose own church, Ballykeel, was planted in the early 1970s, continued, "It is a fact that over the years, society north and south has changed, becoming more secular with fewer people attending church. Having said that, the biblical mandate to make disciples of all nations, which includes our own, has not gone away. People still need to hear the Good News of the Gospel.

"Across the world Christ's Church is growing and there is a genuine desire within PCI to expand and grow too, reaching those in new ways who have yet to hear the Gospel. I hope that Saturday's conference inspired those who have this call upon their lives to build new expressions of church, and so introduce new people in new places to a new life in Christ," Dr McNeely said.



Keynote speaker Scotty Smith, who has written and spoken extensively about church planting, is part of the leadership team of West End Community Church in Nashville, Tennessee. He is also partnering with Liberty Church in Dublin and its work in the capital's inner city.

Reflecting on the conference Mr Smith said, "I loved the title of the conference, 'A time to plant', because that phrase covers the entire history of redemption. Many times we are slow to realise here is the joy of our Heavenly Father, who before the formation of the world, determined to shape people in terms of a universal family, focussing them in local communities of the church."



Mr Smith continued, "Today we were looking at the Apostle Paul who is a consummate church planter. We saw his heart for the Gospel, his heart for the

fullness of history that is our Father's commitment to one day fill the earth with His glory and to use the local church as a primary 'show and tell' of that great story. That's what we were kind of looking at today, blasting our hearts with the Gospel, the story of God and the centrality of the church."

Thanking Mr Smith for his inspiring contribution the Convener of the Council for Mission in Ireland, Very Rev Frank Sellar DL, said "A time to plant was one of the most enjoyable and worthwhile events I've been at for a very long time. I'm certain its benefits are yet to be seen."

Having spoken at the [Annual Conference of Presbyterian Women](#) in Belfast earlier in the day, Presbyterian Moderator, Right Reverend Dr David Bruce, travelled to Dundalk and gave a closing address to inspire those present about God's heart for church planting.

Speaking afterwards Dr Bruce said, "I was tremendously encouraged by what I heard and saw today. I came away with a very positive sense that God was leading us to do more of this and confident that He would lead us to new places and new people where we can make new connections."

Secretary of State's latest abortion move

19.5.2022 | Church in Society, Statements,
Public Affairs



The Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) has described the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland's further intervention today to ensure the commissioning of the most destructive liberal abortion regime in these islands as, 'a continued assault on the preciousness of life.'

In a joint statement, Reverend Trevor Gribben, Clerk of the General Assembly and General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, and Reverend Daniel Kane, Convener of PCI's Council for Public Affairs, said, "Our deep and abiding concern is for the welfare of everyone, which includes the unborn child, but also the long-term good of mothers, and the fact that all life is precious whether pre-born or post-natal. We never thought Northern Ireland would lead the way with such immoral and liberal laws, having had legislation previously that sought to strike a careful balance between protecting the life of the mother and the unborn child. We see today's intervention by Mr Lewis as not only unjust, but a continued assault on the preciousness of life."

"As a caring community of faith, we recognise the sensitivities and complexities which arise for women, and their families, who experience a crisis during pregnancy that leads them to consider termination. This is why we have voiced our support and advocated for the introduction of state-of-the-art perinatal care services to offer practical, emotional and spiritual support in these difficult circumstances," they said.

The senior Presbyterians were speaking after the **Secretary of State used powers given to him by the UK Parliament earlier** this year to empower him to direct Northern Ireland Departments, in this instance in relation to commissioning abortion services.

Mr Gribben and Mr Kane continued, “In recent weeks the Secretary of State and UK Government have indicated that listening to the people of Northern Ireland has led to changes in their thinking around legacy and their approach to the Northern Ireland Protocol. And yet with this action the Secretary of State is ignoring the voices of the 79 per cent of the 21,000 individuals and organisations who responded to the Northern Ireland Office’s 2019 abortion consultation, opposing its plans.

“Mr Lewis was under no obligation to bring forward this maximalist approach to implementing the recommendations of the 2018 Report of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, known as ‘The CEDAW Report’. Not only that, but he has in effect, been given a blank cheque to interfere unilaterally with many aspects of the devolved administration in Northern Ireland. As we have consistently said, such a power grab by the UK Government would be unthinkable in the Scottish, or Welsh devolved contexts.”

In conclusion, Mr Gribben and Mr Kane said, “While the Secretary of State’s move to undermine the principles at the heart of the finely balanced devolved settlement in Northern Ireland is a political act, we see the removal of protection of the lives of unborn children as an unacceptable, immoral and retrograde step.”

Unless the Church of Scotland returns to the Gospel, it will die



by [THEWEEFLEA](#) May 26, 2022



What Happened?

After a long and protracted process which began with the Scott Rennie case in 2009, the Church of Scotland [approved the solemnisation of same-sex marriages](#) in the Church by a vote of 276 to 136 at this week's General Assembly in Edinburgh. Ministers can now apply to be celebrants, and no one will be compelled to take part.

The Moderator, Rev Dr Ian Greenshields, explained why this had taken so long.

"The Church of Scotland is a broad church and there are diverse views on the subject of same-sex marriage among its members. There has been a lengthy, prayerful and in-depth discussion and debate about this topic for many years at all levels of the Church to find a solution that respects diversity and values the beliefs of all."

There was considerable concern at the beginning of this process that the evangelicals would leave. Given the decline in the Church, the Church leaders were well aware of the devastating impact this would have – so they played the long game using a mix of carrot and stick. On the one hand they appointed evangelical moderators (whose job was to ensure that the evangelicals stayed on board and ensured that there were

theological commissions with evangelicals on board – although always a minority). On the other hand, they made it difficult for evangelicals to leave – for example playing hard ball over buildings and finances.

These tactics worked. Although a number of evangelicals did leave – including almost all the big evangelical congregations in the cities – there was not a mass exodus. Indeed, some evangelicals facilitated the change.

What does it mean?

The politicians approve. For example, the SNP tweeted their delight: “Congratulations to the Church of Scotland – to all those campaigners for today’s historic moment! An overwhelming majority in the General Assembly in favour of allowing ministers to conduct same-sex marriages.”

And of course, the media are on board. It is incomprehensible to most modern journalists how anyone could be opposed to same-sex marriage. To them it is like being opposed to love! The trouble is when you ask them to define ‘love’, they struggle.

The Church of Scotland is now fully on board with the progressive ‘values’ that run contemporary Scotland. This week they also passed a motion [supporting the government’s ban](#) on so called ‘conversion therapy’. It’s strange that they appear to be silent about the other great social issue currently dividing society – transgender ideology. It would be good if the Assembly told us what a woman is and acted in defence of women.

Where is the Church going?

The answer is: to extinction. The Church of Scotland has seen [a fall of a third of its membership](#) in the past decade. The Trustees report stated: “A 34 per cent reduction was seen between 2011 and 2021, with no indication of this trend reversing from 2021 congregational data.” Over the past 60 years, the Church has lost a million of the 1.3 million members it once enjoyed.

A BBC Scotland journalist suggested that the reason for this decline was because it had not accepted same-sex marriage sooner. The trouble with this description is that it is demonstrably false. Churches which are more liberal tend to decline more quickly. The work of [John Hayward on Church growth modelling](#) is fascinating.

He argues from the data that the Church of Scotland is likely to be extinct by the middle of this century. He also shows that every church that has supported progressive ideology and same-sex marriage has declined.

There are some in the Church of Scotland who know this. Rev Phil Gunn, minister of Rosskeen Parish Church in Ross-shire, asked the Assembly: “A Church that does not

provoke any crisis, preach a Gospel that does not unsettle, proclaim a Word of God that does not get under anyone's skin or a Word of God that does not touch the real sin of the society in which it is being proclaimed, what kind of Gospel is that?"

Unless the Church of Scotland returns to the Gospel, it will die. To some, this seems a strange statement. What does same-sex marriage have to do with the Gospel? It's straightforward. We do not make up the Gospel. We receive it by revelation from Christ – through his word. Part of that is his teaching about marriage. When we start to dismantle that word and rearrange it according to the views of our culture, then it is not the Gospel we believe, but ourselves. When we move away from Scripture, we move away from Christ. Whenever a Church does that, it withers and dies.

When the world lauds the Church for adopting its values, it is a sign that the Church is unnecessary, irrelevant and judged by Christ. That is why observing the General Assembly this week was a bit like being at a funeral. The stench of decline and spiritual death was everywhere.

Hayward [expresses it well](#):

"I suspect many people in the church do not support the church's redefinition of marriage. But they do not have the power to prevent change.

"Like other older denominations, the Church of Scotland has a disconnect between its ecclesiastical leaders and its members. The former are not overly bothered by church decline. For them, the church is about politics and power, not size and conversion. The people who disagree are faced with the choice between leaving or staying in a congregation dominated by tensions between people for and against SSM.

"This is not a recipe for recovery but for accelerated decline. The future of the progressive denominations is bleak. Despite the enthusiasm of leaders for the new ideology, they face division and despondency in the church and a faster decline. The embrace of same-sex marriage is the final gasp of churches near the end of their lifecycle. Desperately sad."

Indeed.



David Robertson runs The ASK Project in Sydney, Australia. He [blogs at the Wee Flea](#).

[Connecting with Culture](#)

What Happens when Johnny Depp Loses Everything?



It feels like everywhere I look online; I'm confronted with posts and videos dissecting Johnny Depp's legal case against his ex-wife, Amber Heard. There's commentary on who's winning the PR battle, video compilations of the most dramatic moments, and the opinions of various celebrities on the case.

In brief: in 2016, Amber Heard filed for divorce against Depp and accused him of physical abuse. Given the horror of domestic abuse, many were confused and angry to think the Hollywood star could have stooped to such evil. Depp claimed the accusation was untrue and is now suing Heard for defamation.

The trial is yet to complete, but Depp has stated he's already 'lost everything'; his career and reputation have been ruined by the allegations.

I'm too far away from the facts of the case to make a judgment on who is 'in the right': Depp, Heard, or neither. But I'm left reflecting on Depp's words about the state he finds himself in. What happens to the identity of one of the most famous men on the planet when he feels like he's 'lost everything'? What is he left with?

Another person in the public eye is the recently retired Irish rugby player Andrew Trimble. During an interview with the BBC, Trimble, a man of Christian faith, states that although he loves the game, he is 'defined by something more important'. His faith supported him when he was omitted from the 2015 Rugby World Cup due to injury. Faith gives him an 'eternal

perspective', which makes him happier whilst playing the sport. If his career comes crashing down, due to injury or whatever else, all is not lost.

The Christian message declares that all human life is valuable because we are created and loved by God. Although God's gifted us all in various and diverse ways, our ultimate identity needn't rest in what we do and whatever benefits come from it. I don't know Depp's religious views, but I do know this is good news for Johnny Depp and Amber Heard, as it is for Andrew Trimble, and for me.

In practice, if we let this message transform us, the people we encounter in our daily lives may be surprised and curious to find that although we work hard and aim to achieve success in life, we've found treasure that is greater than any job title, fame, or promotion. Perhaps that's treasure our culture is hungry for.

Dr Luke Martin
Founder, The Creed and Culture Project.

SUNDAYS AT RAILWAY STREET
MORNING SERVICE 10.30AM
BEGINNERS CHURCH – NO 31
KIDS CHURCH – MAIN HALL
YOUTH CHURCH – Brownlee Room

Service will be live streamed.

Evening Service – 6.30pm (see services page for details)

BOYS' BRIGADE
Monday - Company Section 7.30-9:00pm
Tuesday - Anchor Boys – 6.30-7:30pm &
Junior Section – 7.00-8:15pm

GIRLS' BRIGADE
Thursdays
Tiny Tots & Explorers - 6:00-7:00pm
Juniors, Seniors & Brigaders - 7:30-9:00pm

PRAYER FOCUS
3rd Monday of each month 8.00-9.00pm

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN
Fourth Monday of each month
Main Hall at 8:00pm

422
4th Thursday of every month

Bible Discovery Group
1st & 3rd Thursday of the month at 10.30am

LADIES ZOOM BIBLE STUDY
2nd & 4th Thursday of the month
at 10.30am