

Dear brothers and sisters in the Presbyterian family,

at the opening worship of the Special General Assembly (SGA) on Wednesday 18 February, I pointed those present to the message and meaning of Psalm 46. This is a psalm the people of God have often turned to in times of trouble and what I pointed out is that our Presbyterian Church in Ireland is caught in a storm and that storm continues. However, the great reassurance of Psalm 46 is that we are not forsaken, for the Lord assures us that he is sovereign and comes to His people in their storms. Our response to this knowledge is to make Him our refuge and to be still and know that He is God.

Following the SGA, I wanted to write to inform you of the steps we have taken in light of the criminal investigation by the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the statutory inquiry set up by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland. As noted at the Special Assembly, the PSNI has requested that I act as the main liaison person with the investigation team, assisted by the Deputy Clerk Revd Peter Gamble. As this is a role that no previous moderator has ever been asked to fulfil, the General Council has set up a special advisory task group to assist me in this work.

Updates were presented on the progress of expanding our new safeguarding department and the production of new policies and procedures. Further reports will be brought to June's General Assembly in relation to the work of the task groups, which have been set up to consider PCI's use of compromise agreements; issues of culture, governance and integrity; and an assessment of the need for a survivor redress scheme.

The two substantive issues discussed and agreed at the SGA concerned this year's annual meeting of the General Assembly in June and a new senior leadership structure. Firstly, it was agreed to extend the General Assembly from three days to four, to enable greater scrutiny, debate, worship and fellowship, with the General Assembly now planned to take place, DV, from 9 to 12 June.

The second substantive issue was a discussion on the proposed new structure for the senior leadership team in Assembly Buildings. Members of Assembly agreed to split the current role of the Clerk of the General Assembly and General Secretary, creating a new role for the Clerk of the General Assembly, with a new post being created - Director of Operations. These two posts, along with the Deputy Clerk, who also has a slightly revised role, will now form the senior leadership team.

Details of the discussions that took place and the decisions that were taken, can be found in The Review, which is available on the PCI website, or by following this link: [https://issuu.com/presbyterianireland/docs/the\\_special\\_assembly\\_review\\_2026](https://issuu.com/presbyterianireland/docs/the_special_assembly_review_2026) You can also watch the worship service and the business sessions - these too can be found on the PCI website here: [www.presbyterianireland.org/specialga26](http://www.presbyterianireland.org/specialga26)

Please continue to pray for our denomination as we navigate these difficult times. Please pray for me, and others who are seeking to give leadership and direction, and for all our staff centrally who are working hard to make things better. Also, we should never forget that at the centre of this storm are those that we have let down, those who have been harmed, or put at risk of harm, by our failures. We continue to lament our failures towards them and their families.

As we go forward, let me close by concluding with the opening words of Psalm 46, which act as a constant reminder to us all to trust the Lord in this difficult time - "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble."

Yours in Christ,

*Richard Murray*

Rt Revd Dr Richard Murray  
Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

You can keep up with all that is going on in church life by following our Facebook page, subscribing to our YouTube channel, or visiting our website: [www.firstcookstown.co.uk](http://www.firstcookstown.co.uk)

To contact Revd Michael Currie, Tel: [07754 168911](tel:07754168911) or Email: [mcurrie@presbyterianireland.org](mailto:mcurrie@presbyterianireland.org)

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First Cookstown is a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, registered with the Charity Commission of Northern Ireland (NIC 105651).



## First Cookstown

Knowing Jesus, making Jesus known

## Weekly Bulletin Sunday 8 March 2026

*"Remember your mercy, O LORD, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old." Psalm 25:6*

We warmly welcome you to worship this morning on this first day of another week, whether you are part of our church family, here in First Cookstown, or just visiting with us.

We hope that as we worship together we will encounter God and experience the hope and assurance of the Gospel and the relevance of God's word in our world today.

If you're new to First Cookstown, we do hope you have been made welcome at the door and someone helped you get your bearings. Maybe you are new to the area and you are looking for a local church where you can feel at home.

### Catechism Corner

...will return next week!

#### Praise

##### AM

IPH 527 - The Lord's my Shepherd  
Our God is a great big God  
The Goodness of God

##### PM

He knows my name (I have a maker)  
IPH 402 - Here is love, vast as the ocean  
Dark, dark is the valley (my God is all I need)  
Thank you for the Cross (worthy is the lamb)

#### Today

11:30 am **PW Service:** Speaker - Sylvia Santos Bryce, Deaconess in West Church, Ballymena. It will be interesting to hear about her role and how the Lord is using her to support ministry in that congregation. (there will be a cup of tea served afterwards in the church hall)

6:00 pm **Evening Service:** Revd Michael Currie; Jude 17-23 "Trusting God's Power"

7:00 pm **Youth Fellowship** meet in *The Loft*.

**Monday**

2:00 pm

**Friends at First** monthly **Craft & Chat** happens from 2pm to 4pm. We will be meeting in the **Minor Hall**. Come along and enjoy a cup of tea, some chat and lots of fun making a craft item (or just sit and chat).

6:00 pm

**Squirrel Scouts** meet in the halls until 6:55 pm.

6:30 pm

**Cub Scouts** meet in the halls until 8:00 pm.

7:00 pm

**Beaver Scouts** meet in the halls until 8:00 pm.

**Tuesday**

10:30 am

**Prayer Time** in the Morrison Room.

7:45 pm

**First Cookstown Bowling Club:** We look forward to welcoming anybody who would like to try bowls for the first, or who maybe hasn't played in a while, as well as our 'old faithfuls'. Even if you just want to come along to watch, chat and have a cup of tea, please come and join us.

8:00 pm

**Kirk Session** meet in the Morrison Room.

**Wednesday**

10:30 am

**Bible Study** in the Morrison Room. (Handouts available)

6:30 pm

**Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Rangers** in *The Loft* and halls.

8:00 pm

**Evening Bible Study** (repeated).

**Thursday**

8:00 pm

**Prayer Meeting** in the Minister's Room.

**Next Sunday**

10:15 am

**NO Sunday School and Bible Class.**

10:50 am

**Prayer Time** in the Minister's room until 11:10 am.

11:30 am

**Morning Service:** Revd Michael Currie; Luke 18:1-8 - Encounters on the Road to Jerusalem #5

6:00 pm

**Evening Service:** Revd Michael Currie; Jude 24-25 "Living in God's Glory"

7:00 pm

**Youth Fellowship** meet in *The Loft*.

**Looking ahead...**

Thursday 19/3/26

**Trefoil Guild** meet in the Minor Hall, 10:30 am to 12 noon.

Sunday 22/3/26

**Mr Phil Dunn (EMF)**

Sunday 22/3/26

**Joint Youth Fellowship** in the Morrison Room.

Monday 23/3/26

**First Cookstown Scout Group** is holding a **Beetle drive** for Squirrels, Beavers and Cubs, their families and friends from 6:30 pm in the church hall. All members of First Cookstown Church are invited along for an evening of fun. Cost is £2.50 per person or £10 per family and the charity being supported is Guide Dogs NI. Light refreshments will be served.

Sunday 29/3/26

**Morning Service:** Encounters on the Road to Jerusalem #6 (family service - no children's church)

Sunday 29/3/26

**Presbytery Mission in Ireland Evening** in Molesworth Presbyterian Church

Friday 3/4/26

**Messy Church**, 2:00 to 4:30 pm

Friday 3/4/26

**Joint Good Friday Service** in First Cookstown at 8:00 pm.

Sunday 5/4/26

**Dawn Presbytery Service** at Ballyronan Marina at 6:30 am.

Sunday 5/4/26

**Easter Morning Service** at 11:30 am.

Sunday 5/4/26

**Joint Evening Service** in Molesworth.

**Messy Church**

Once again, we hope to hold Messy Church on Good Friday afternoon (3rd April). This is always a great afternoon as we share the Easter story with the children who come along. If you would be able to help, please speak to Michael if you have not already done so.

**REACH**

The REACH team, made up of volunteers from the local churches, have started a night-time street outreach ministry. If you would be interested in being involved, or would like some more information please speak to Michael.

**Parking**

Work continues on the old manse. This means that the back yard is no longer available for additional parking.

**Football**

A group from the local churches meet each Friday evening at MUSA to play football. If you would be interested, contact Michael for more information.

**Cookstown High School**

Everyone is invited to a service of celebration for 220 years of Cookstown High School, which will be held in Molesworth Presbyterian Church on Sunday 22nd March at 3:30pm. This will provide an opportunity to reflect on its long history, give thanks for the generations of pupils and staff who are part of its story and look forward with hope to the future.

**Old Manse Update**

The building contractor has taken down most of the scaffolding, except at the front where it is still needed for leadwork to finish off at the bay roofs. Work has been ongoing internally with the insulating of the attics and re-plastering to some of the rooms. The heating system has been turned back on to help with the drying, which will take some time due to the thick solid walls.

**Presbytery Mission in Ireland Evening**

The Presbytery Mission in Ireland Evening will be held in Molesworth Presbyterian Church on Sunday 29th March at 6:30pm. The speakers will be Revd Henry Hanna (rural chaplain) and Nigel Craig will also be sharing about the work of chaplaincy in Queen's University and Union Theological College, Belfast.

**Prayer Requests**

If anyone has any requests for prayer, please contact Lynne Dripps on 07901 691093.

**Scout Leaders required (urgently)**

As you may be aware, the Scout Section of 1st Cookstown Scout Group (11-14year olds) has not been able to run for the past 2 years as we haven't been able to find leaders. This situation gives us great concern. If there is anyone who would feel able to undertake the role with 1/2 others please contact Margaret Hamilton ([07880 975337](tel:07880975337)) or Colin Rea ([07761 229052](tel:07761229052)) for details.

**ROTAS**

**Church Stewarding Rota**

March ..... Alison Bell, Chris Kerr  
April ..... Clarke Faulkner, Ronnie Nicholl

**Collection Rota**

Manse side (March) ..... Alison Bell  
Town side (March) ..... Norman Purdy  
Gallery (March) ..... Chris McKnight, John Purdy  
Manse side (April) ..... Glen Morton  
Town side (April) ..... Clarke Faulkner  
Gallery (April) ..... Ted McKinney, Jim Donaghy

**FWO Rota**

This week ..... Brian Donaghy    Next week ..... Brian Donaghy

**Sound Desk Rota**

Today ..... David Hartley    Next week ..... Stephen Park

**Junior Church Rota**

Today ..... Helen Black, Sandra Hunter  
Next Week ..... Jennifer Park, Sharon Crooks

**Crèche Rota**

Today ..... Jennifer Park, Gillian Lyle  
Next Sunday ..... Sandra Black, Paula Faulkner