

Evening Service

There will be no in-person evening service this evening 29th November at 6:30pm.

This service can be accessed on the Church Facebook page or Youtube.

You can access the Church Facebook page here:

www.facebook.com/FirstPortadown.

Please also check the Church website for updated material – www.firstportadown.org

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Date for your Diary...

## Financial Contributions

Financial Contributions can be left into Church on Saturday 28th November 10:00am-12noon.

## Congregational Committee Meeting

Tuesday 15th December 2020  
7:30pm

### Contact numbers:

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# At Home for Christmas?

The Moderator is calling the entire Church to pray over the weekend 27th-29th November 2020.

There will be special times of prayer on zoom on

**Friday, Saturday and Sunday at 8:00pm**

**ID: 105229314387**

**Password: Prayer**

In light of the recent lockdown restrictions there will be no “in person” service on Sunday 29th or 5th December.

There will be no Midweek service on Wednesday 2nd or 9th December.

These services will be available online and can be accessed through the Church Facebook page or Youtube.

*The prayer calendar for December 2020 is available to download today.*

## Sunday 29th November 2020

*The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!*

John 1:29



We welcome you to our services today and pray that our time of worship and fellowship will be a blessing to us all.

## Reading Group

The recommended book for December 2020 and January 2021 is

### **Confronting Christianity**

By Rebecca McLaughlin

You can find the Reading Group section on the website at the link below.

<https://www.firstportadown.org/ministries/reading-group/>

#### Electronic banking

If you would like to contribute by online banking, please use these account details:

##### *Freewill Offering*

Sort code 90-23-54  
Account number 40567431  
Please use reference **FWO** followed by the 3-digit number from your envelope.

##### *Property Fund*

Sort code 90-23-54  
Account number 40567458  
Please use reference **PF** followed by the 3-digit number from your envelope.

##### *Missionary Fund*

Sort code 90-23-54  
Account number 40567474  
Please use reference **MF** followed by the 3-digit number from your envelope.

Please ensure when contributing online you add the **3 digit number** from your set of envelopes as well as the **reference** for which account you wish you contribute towards e.g. MF, PF or FWO. Without these details it will not be possible to identify who is giving and where they want their money to go.



## Moderator's Weekend of Prayer

### Let's Pray – Weekend Extra

We have been through some testing times in 2020. Sometimes, it has felt like a battle. As the weeks have extended into months of lockdown (with other restrictions), we may have been wondering it would ever end. Will things ever get back to the way they were?

We can give no guarantees about the future. We are after all, “aliens and strangers” here just passing through (Hebrews 11:13), and our true and ultimate home is in heaven. That said, it is important for us to be fully invested in the challenge of living well in a world which is deeply broken, tainted by sin and “groaning” with the in-built tensions of being out of step with God. (Romans 8:22)

So, as we prepare to pray at various points through the weekend of 27-29 November 2020, we will do what Paul taught us to do in Ephesians 6:18. “Pray, in the Spirit, on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.”

## Covid-19 at home

- Pray for healthcare staff in Hospitals across Ireland, that God would give new reserves of strength for each day.
- Pray especially for frontline staff working in units set up to care for Covid-19 patients that God would grant them safety and success in their work.
- Pray for hospital administrators who face the seemingly impossible task of prioritising the availability of beds, asking God for wisdom and peace of heart in crucial decision making.
- Pray for Healthcare chaplains who have been working steadily for the past nine months with this new reality, asking God to help them sensitively take opportunities to share his love.
- Pray for people you know, including families, who have been directly affected by illness caused by Covid-19, asking God to give grace and bring healing.

## Brexit

- It is still not clear what the final outcome of the negotiations between the UK, Ireland and the European Union will be. Pray that, as the date for transition approaches at the end of December, there will be clarity on policies to follow, and their implications.
- Pray for owners of businesses and their staff who are concerned about the impact of Brexit on the life and work, asking God to help them to prepare and provide in a time of uncertainty.
- Pray for stability in the community in Northern Ireland, especially asking God

that the good work done in building improved community relations over the past 20 years would be able to continue.

### **Covid overseas – Moderator’s Appeal**

- South Sudan. Pray for the Rev Canon Emmanuel Nattania Bandi, who serves as a volunteer counsellor with a coronavirus helpline in South Sudan. For him, this is a natural extension of his calling as a pastor. He says, “I was called to care for people and as a counsellor my work is to help my people who are distressed and helpless.” Ask God to bless him and his work.
- Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Pray for Fatuma is a 25 year-old married mother of six children. Earlier this year fighting between the Congolese army and a local militia forced Fatuma and her family to flee for their lives, joining the over 1.4 million people displaced by conflict in DRC between January and June this year. The family are now living with a relative. The house they are sharing has only two rooms and is now occupied by sixteen people in total. Physical distancing would be impossible should someone fall ill. With a population of nearly 90 million people in DRC, less than 1 in 20 people have access to soap and water at home, Fatuma’s family included. Ask God to protect and bring his peace that passes understanding in Fatuma’s circumstances.

### **Pastoral needs locally**

- Pray for families who have lost loved ones to Covid-19 or related health conditions. Especially ask God to lead and care for them as their process of grieving has been made much more difficult by the restrictions surrounding funerals.
- Pray for PCI ministers who are seeking to be attentive pastors to their people, yet are prevented from visiting in homes. Ask God to help them find simple ways to connect, give listening hearts and find ways to bring his Word to bear on real situations.
- Pray for congregations who are seeking to find new and imaginative ways to care for people who are lonely, isolated or fearful. Pray that a ministry of presence in person or at a distance might prove powerful.
- Thank God for technology like the phone, Zoom, and other means of keeping in touch.
- Pray for schools, teachers and pupils, facing uncertainty about exams and the pattern of the academic year in 2021. Ask God to help all to continue to find motivation despite many unknowns.

### **Mission of God in a crisis**

- Give thanks that the Bible contains many stories of times when God’s people needed to adapt to new and unwelcome change. Pray that God would help us as a people as we learn from these important records from the past.
- Pray that God would reveal to us what he is saying to us in this crisis, and that we would have ears to hear.

- Give thanks for the many stories of people who have been asking questions about faith, the meaning of life and our significance as persons in the world. Pray that our churches would be ready to give a reason for our hope.

### **The future**

- Pray for faith to grow among us, rather than be quenched, and that we would be ready for the next part of our story on this island.
- Pray that God would continue to raise up a generation of new leaders to serve at every level in our congregations. Give thanks for the students for the ministry awaiting placement as they move towards completion of their training.
- Pray that congregations which have experienced a downturn in income may allocate their diminished resources wisely, and that as a people, we would experience God’s provision.
- Pray for staff in congregations and in Assembly Buildings whose posts have been made redundant – that they would know the peace of God in these unwelcome changes, and find places to serve.