

CONGREGATION OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH PORTADOWN



Minister

Rev. Robin Brown Telephone: 07740 677481

Female Pastoral Worker

Mrs. Kirsty Lee Finlay Telephone: 07564 709099

Ministry Coordinator

Miss Joanna McFarland 07835 946895

Pastoral Visitor

Rev John Hutchinson 07841 696008

Kirk Session:

Noel Brownlee, Gilbert Carson, John Crozier, Brian Dawson, Robert Dowey, John Finlay, Samuel Gamble, Gareth Greer, Eric Hammond, David Hunter, Stephen Hunter, Robert J Irwin, Gary Kennedy, Mark Kent, Brian Maguire, James McCavery, Nigel McClelland, James McKittrick, Mark Neale, Philip Patterson, William Ruddell, George Russell,

The Kirk Session act as charity trustees.

Elders Emeriti:

Robert Chambers, Clifford Clyde, Norman Cuthbert, Robert Cuthbert, Rea Finlay, Dennis Flannigan, Melvin Irwin, William Jackson, Robert Johnston, Herbert Morrow, Garfield O'Hara, John Ruddock, Mervyn Wylie.

Congregational Committee:

Kenneth Adamson, Harry Burke, Jonathan Campbell, Graeme Clarke, Jonathan Cousins, Terry Devlin, David Finlay, Raymond Forde, Kenneth Gilpin, Richard Gilpin, Jonathan Graham, Jon Hunter, Cecil Hynes, Nigel Jameson, Elma Kent, Neville McDowell, John Murdock, George Proctor, Matthew Winter, Brian Wright, William Wylie.

Clerk of Session: Robert Dowey
Hon. Secretary: Jonathan Graham
Hon. Treasurer: Nigel Jameson
Administrator: Kirsty-Lee Finlay
Caretakers: Cecil Hynes
Mark Hobby

SESSION SUB-COMMITTEES

Sub-Committee

Discipleship
Evangelism
Human Resources
Missionary
Youth and Family

Convenor

Brian Maguire
Noel Brownlee
Robert Dowe
Jim McCavery
Mark Kent

COMMITTEE SUB-COMMITTEES

Sub-Committee

Business Management
Communications
Estate Management
Financial Management
Social Outreach

Convenor

Brian Dawson
Jonathan Cousins
George Proctor
Nigel Jameson
David Finlay

SESSION AND COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Archives
Recording Ministry
Flower Arranging
FWO & Property Fund
Gift Aid
Missionary Fund Treasurer

George Ruddock
Richard Gilpin
Patricia Burke
Nigel Jameson
Valerie Clarke
Eric Hammond

PROPERTY TRUSTEES

Robert Dowe, Eric Hammond, Brian Hawthorne, Nigel McClelland, John Murdock, Sam Preston, John Ruddock, George Russell.

Property trustees hold the property of the congregation upon trust for the congregation.

CHURCH DIRECTORY

Chatterbox	Patricia McGuire
CLICK	Mark Kent
Choir	Graeme Clarke
Crèche	Emma Moore
Edenderry CE	Gilbert Carson
Edenderry Fellowship and Luncheon Club	Cecil Hynes
Fellowship Groups	Brian McGuire
We care to share	Hazel Neale
Presbyterian Women	Jill Gowan
Senior CE Fellowship	John Ruddock
Youth Bible Class	Matthew Winter
Youth Fellowship	Matthew Winter

UNIFORMED ORGANISATIONS

Boys' Brigade

Captain	Stephen Hunter
Anchor Boys	Maureen Hunter
Junior Section	Neville McDowell
Company Section	Jon Hunter
Senior Section	Jonathan Graham

Eden Girls

Juniors	Louise Irwin
Inters	Lesley Dowey
Seniors	Wendy McKee

Publications

Presbyterian Herald & Reachout	Brian Wright
Wider World	Patricia Gillespie
Prayer Calendar	June Dowey
	Kirsty-Lee Finlay
Points for Prayer	Rosemary Conkey

LISTING OF ELDERS' DISTRICTS

This shall be maintained by the Clerk of Session and an up-to-date listing kept in the Church Office.

**Appointments can change during the year.
Please contact the office for up to date details**

FIRST PORTADOWN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH DIARY
(Check website or weekly bulletin for details – www.firstportadown.org)

SUNDAY	10:00 am	Youth Bible Class
	11:00 am	MORNING SERVICE Crèche (Pre-Primary, operates during Morning Service) CLICK (<i>Children Learning in Christ's Kingdom</i>)
	6:30 pm	EVENING SERVICE
	8:00 pm	Youth Fellowship (<i>fortnightly</i>)
	8:00 pm	Senior CE Fellowship (<i>First and Third Mondays</i>)
MONDAY	6:15 pm	Juniors
TUESDAY	6:15 pm	Inters
	7:30 pm	Seniors
	7:30 pm	Congregational Committee (<i>Second Tuesday</i>)
	7:30 pm	Kirk Session (<i>Last Tuesday</i>)
	8:00 pm	Presbyterian Women (<i>Second Tuesday</i>)
	8:00pm	FP Wheels Club (<i>Third Tuesday</i>)
WEDNESDAY	7:30 am	Men's Prayer Meeting
	10:00 am	Chatterbox
	8:00 pm	MID-WEEK FELLOWSHIP
THURSDAY	1:15 pm	Edenderry Luncheon Club (<i>Last Thursday</i>)
	2:30 pm	Edenderry Fellowship (<i>Last Thursday</i>)
	6:30 pm	Anchor Boys
	6:30 pm	Boys' Brigade Junior Section
	8:00 pm	Boys' Brigade Company Section
	8:00 pm	Boys' Brigade Senior Section
FRIDAY	9:00 pm	Prayer Meeting
	10:00 pm	Nightlight *
SATURDAY	8:00 pm	Edenderry CE

Church Office:

Tel: 028 3839 3773

Email: mail@firstportadown.org

Registered Charity in Northern Ireland (NIC 104957)

MINISTER'S REPORT

In my personal Bible Study, I've been making my way through the Book of Judges, that dark and disturbing account of what happens to a nation in days when there was no king. Inevitably, the story spirals downwards deeper and deeper into sin, as the people throw off the restraints of God's Word and, pursuing their own whims and wishes, some of the later chapters are very difficult to read.

Two lessons seem obvious. Firstly, that there is nothing new under the sun. What takes place in the Book of Judges is mirrored in today's world as society around us throws off the restraint of God's Word and plunges into the most shameful pursuit of sin. And secondly, as for the people of Israel in the days of the Judges, so too today, people mistakenly believe there is no one to hold them to account for their actions. There may have been no 'physical' or 'human' king in Israel, but God was still on the throne and to Him all people must answer. The Book of Judges is a stark reminder that people do not 'naturally' drift towards godliness.

Justification and Sanctification are two 'separate' aspects of the Christ's life, but they must not be 'separated'. To claim to have saving faith, that is, to be justified, and yet not to be experiencing sanctification means that something is seriously amiss in your life. As Teaching Elder, it is my responsibility to ensure that members of First Portadown benefit from the Means of Grace, those gifts of God that encourage our growth in sanctification. My primary task is preaching the Word and leading in worship in order that those who attend our services are challenged by the gospel and changed by the Spirit of God. Along with emphasising the importance of engaging in public worship I want to encourage you in personal Bible Study and Prayer as it is these daily and weekly practices which will keep you from drifting into sin.

Reflecting back on 2023, for most of the year I carried the additional responsibility of looking after the vacant congregation of Waringstown. It was an honour to take part in the installation of Mark Haugh in September and pray that God will use him mightily in his ministry there for many years to come.

In May, we welcomed Joanna McFarland onto the Staff Team as Ministry Coordinator with a particular emphasis on the 18–35-year-olds in the congregation. Already we can see the impact Joanna's work is having and pray that God would continue to use, lead and encourage her as she settles into our congregation and community.

It was a delight to work with Lincoln Rus for six weeks over the summer. I would like to express thanks to all those who helped to make Lincoln's time among us so profitable. I pray that God would continue to guide him in his candidacy for the Presbyterian Church. It would be great to have him as part of PCI.

Thank you all for your support and encouragement. We live in days of great challenge for the Church, days when complacency is fatal to congregations. May we press on together pursuing Christlikeness and faithfulness in His service,

Grace and peace,
Robin

Session Report 2022 YEAR

On 1 January 2022 a new Clerk of Session was appointed. Robert Dowey succeeded John Finlay who had held the post for around 6 years. Thanks is due to John for his faithfulness, example and work during that time while holding down a full-time job as a teacher.

The Year commenced with a Week of Prayer and an Elders conference. A major focus throughout the year was the 200th Anniversary Celebrations of the establishment of the Church (anniversary date is 12 December 2022).

In February the “Hope Explored” course commenced and Rico Tice preached at the morning service. In April the Choir were advised as to changes to be made as to the frequency of the Church Choir leading Congregational Worship. These changes had a mixed reception and necessitated the Minister and Session spending a lot of time over a prolonged period discussing and deciding on the issues arising.

The Kennedy family were home from Cambodia for the months of June and July.

In June Kirsty-Lee Finlay was appointed as a permanent part-time Female Pastoral Worker. The first Sunday of October was the last service conducted by the Assistant Minister Rev Trevor Kane. Trevor and his family left to take up Ministry in Glenwherry Presbyterian Church. Trevor, his wife Suzanne and 5 children played an active role in the congregation and were a great asset to congregational life and witness.

Country Comes to Town was held for the first-time post covid on 8 October and the Church had a stand on the main street of the town.

The Session were notified that Edenderry Ministries Limited would cease trading on 31 December 2022.

200th Anniversary Events

Saturday 8 October	Anniversary Meal with circa 250 people in attendance and an epilogue given by Rev Dr Martyn Cowan.
11-15 October	Professor Rev Zac Cole conducts Services.
13 November	Choir and Musicians lead a Service of Praise.
20 November (Moderator of PCI).	Visiting Preacher Rev Dr John Kirkpatrick
27 November	Visiting Preacher Rev Dr Stafford Carson (previous Minister of the congregation).
20-27 November	Anniversary Exhibition of history past 200 years.
22 November in Ireland.	Dr Andrew Holmes gives a talk on Presbyterianism
25-27 November	Fruitful and Flourishing display exhibited “the Work and Witness of the Congregation focused on the Fruit of the Spirit”.

In summary 2022 was a very busy year and thanks is due to each person who played an active part in the numerous activities occurring, not least the 200 Anniversary Celebrations which added to an already busy program. The year had many joys but also numerous challenges.

Please keep in your Prayers our Minister and Pastoral team. Christian work has always been challenging but in these times in which we live it is particularly challenging.

Wisdom is required for the Session as it strives to lead the spiritual life of the congregation.

Session Report 8 Months to 31 August 2023

The latter half of the 2022 Year had numerous celebrations of the 200th Anniversary, resulting in the 8 months of 2023 appearing to be passive in terms of activity. Non the less, the routine and often unseen work of seeking to advance Christs Kingdom continued albeit with a much lower profile.

The first meeting in January had a period of reflection on the life of Bill Burnett the

longest serving and active Elder (60 years' service) who had died on 16 December 2023.

A finalisation of the 21 names of the newly elected Church Committee was agreed by Session with the first meeting of this Committee to be held on 14 February 2023. At the Session meeting in February a report from a Commission of the Armagh Presbytery dated 20 February 2023 was presented. Session accepted the report and the recommendations in it. Regrettably, despite the report of Presbytery the "fall-out" arising from the changed role of the Choir continued to rumble on during the period of this report.

A new post, that of Ministry Coordinator had been created in 2022 and recruitment had taken place, resulting in the appointment of Miss Joanna McFarland with effect from 1 May 2023. A Summer Assistant, Lincoln Russ from the USA was with the congregation for the month of July and part of August. Scott McMenemy was licensed as a Minister at a service held on Sunday 11 June 2023. From September 2022 until early September 2023 our Minister Rev Robin Brown was Vacancy Convenor of Waringstown Presbyterian Church.

An evening meeting titled "Pastoral Care and Gender Identity" was held in the meeting house for all congregations in the Armagh Presbytery. This subject is very relevant to the secular society we live in. An evangelism outreach event for men was held in June. The Church registered as a "Welcoming Church" and this helped attract "Foreign Nationals" to find the Church and interface with Church members.

The Holiday Bible Club was held in the Church in June. During the summer B.B. camp was held; teams of young people went to Ballina, Malahide and Howth and Philadelphia to do outreach.

A decision was taken that Guides would cease operating at the end of May and they would be replaced with a similar organisation called "Eden Girls" where Biblical Truths could continue to be taught in addition to vocational activities.

A tea was held on Sunday 25 June remembering 50+ years of service in the Choir by Robert Chambers.

Please keep in your Prayers our Minister and Pastoral team. Christian work has always been challenging but in these times in which we live it is particularly challenging.

Wisdom is required for the Session as it strives to lead the spiritual life of the congregation in challenging situations.

It must always be borne in mind that while programs are helpful and useful "Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him for ever". We need to always focus on our Saviour Jesus Christ and worship him in Spirit and in Truth.

Robert Dowey

CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEE

"Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men" - Colossians 3:23

As we reflect on the time that has passed since the last Congregational Committee report, we express our gratitude to the previous Congregational Committee for their dedication and hard work. Their commitment was instrumental in the successful completion of the church refurbishment project, culminating in the official opening and dedication of the refurbished meeting house on Saturday, 27th November 2021.

We are excited about the potential and opportunities presented to our new Congregational Committee which formed last year. We look forward to the manse project and pray that whatever the intention of our congregation for our manse, we can bring glory to Christ and help bring the Gospel to our community.

Our Congregational Committee serves Christ and the congregation in everything they do, ensuring the smooth running of our day-to-day operations. This covers many practical aspects including:

Catering: Ensuring food safety, managing catering events and maintaining hygiene in our kitchens.

Communication: Handling the church's digital and physical media, liaising with the church tech team and the church digital communications team.

Compliance: Managing various compliance aspects including health, safety, fire management, records management, data protection, and first aid.

Property Maintenance: Maintaining all properties and grounds, including the upkeep equipment and service contracts.

Finance: Managing the financial aspects of the church, including banking, book-keeping, financial planning and insurance.

Reception: Managing the freewill offering collection, reception duties, security, and transport.

Social Outreach: Helping identify local social needs while developing a social outreach annual program in partnership with church organisations.

In closing, let us remember that "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace" - 1 Peter 4:10

Jonathan Graham
Congregational Secretary

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

The Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statement can be viewed on the website of the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, www.charitycommissionni.org.uk (Ref NIC104957). If you do not have access and require a copy please contact our Church office telephone, 028 3839 3773.

MISSIONARY REPORT

I am grateful to all the members of the Missionary Committee who have worked hard to support all our missionaries both practically and pastorally, by regular communication with individual missionaries, managing finances, updating the church display board or who have given support in any other way.

Roy Harrison

On the 21st of August this year we were deeply saddened to hear of the death of one of our former mission partners, Roy Harrison, after a period of illness. The funeral service was held a week later in Court, Switzerland. He is survived by his wife, Ruth with whom he served for over 50 years with CEF, Europe. In the words of his son Paul, he was "a faithful and good servant who ran the race, fought the good fight and who loved and served the Lord with humility and joy". Because of his work, many children throughout

Europe came to know the life-changing message of the gospel. We continue to pray for Ruth and the wider family at their time of loss.

The missionaries we currently support are:

Jonathan and Nicola McCracken (ECM Claremorris)

Rob and Kyla Cuthbert (Ambassadors Football, Senegal)

Luke and Karis Carson (London City Mission)

Henry and Silvia Bell (WEC)

John and Sarah Kennedy (Hope International School, Cambodia)

Avisai and Jude Suarez (WEC UK)

It remains a great privilege to support all our mission partners who seek to serve the Lord, often in very difficult and testing circumstances.

Jonathan and Nicola McCracken are very encouraged by signs of growth they are seeing in their work in Claremorris. A St. Patrick's Day outreach was successful and there was a conference for a Ladies' group as well as a youth weekend. A number of summer outreach events in Claremorris went well and weekly church attendance is now around 40/50. The church is now considering the possibility of purchasing a premises of their own instead of renting facilities for church services etc.

Rob and Kyla Cuthbert

It has been wonderful to welcome Rob, Kyla, Jacob, Manuela, Daniel and Micah home for an extended stay in Northern Ireland. Within the next few weeks there will be some events to celebrate the work of Ambassadors as well an opportunity for Rob and Kyla to update us on the development of the football facilities at Sanghe and the construction of a new home there as well at establishing a link with the nearby ITES Bible College.

Luke Carson's recent prayer letter was very encouraging. A large number of men are coming to a Bible study on Wednesday afternoons. There are many good, open discussions among those participating. The Friday morning discipleship group continues to meet. Those who attend are experiencing situations which can often be complicated and difficult. Prayer is also needed for those facing long sentences or others whose release is imminent.

Henry and Silvia Bell have moved from Perth to Nepal. While in Perth, they have been getting to know people from the community among whom they will be working. Silvia has taken the opportunity to learn the language and customs of the country. The project team with which Henry and Silvia are involved is close to reaching agreement about what will be done with the produce they grow but a number of administrative hurdles must be overcome before their project can begin.

John and Sarah Kennedy continue to lead busy lives in their respective roles within Hope International School, Phnom Penh. They were able to visit Sarah's parents in the USA last summer which also provided them with a much-needed break from their work.

Jude and Avisai Suarez.

Avisai continues to use his carpentry skills and his involvement with International Meeting Point in Belfast to reach others and has made many useful contacts through the "Welcome Church" initiative. Jude has also built many solid relationships with the international community through the "Shine Café" which recently held a successful barbeque.

As ever, we are extremely grateful to the congregation for their faithful and sacrificial giving over the past year. It is a great tribute to them that, despite the difficult economic circumstances many are experiencing, the level of giving remains very consistent. We also wish to express our gratitude for generous bequests from the estates of the late Barbara Hunter and Billy Calvert which were recently given to the Missionary Fund.

These have already proved to be very valuable in financially assisting those involved in missionary work.

When questioned before the Sanhedrin about being a follower of Jesus, Peter affirmed that "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved." (Acts 4 v 12). We continue to be grateful for all those who have gone from our church to share this message with others.

Jim McCavery

TREASURER'S REPORT - MISSIONARY COMMITTEE

On behalf of the Missionary Committee, I would like to thank all who contributed towards the support of our six missionary families during 2022. The families who are supported: Henry & Silvia Bell, Luke & Karis Carson, Robert & Kyla Cuthbert, John & Sarah Kennedy, Jonathan & Nicola McCracken, and Avisai & Judith Suarez very much appreciate your ongoing interest. Through the Missionary Fund we endeavour to meet our families' basic costs and, unless otherwise designated, your contributions go in full towards meeting this need.

Giving during 2022 decreased compared with 2021 (down £3345) but due to a very generous legacy from the Late William Calvert estate we were able to forward £73 029 to the above-mentioned families together with donations totaling £1165 to others as designated. This represents an increase in support of 7.37%.

In 2021 £69 343 was distributed. One area of notable decrease has been in recovery of Gift Aid - in 2022 £9 115 was received against £11545 in 2021. If you are a taxpayer and wish to have an extra 25% claimed from HMRC on your behalf, please ask for a Gift Aid form. Methods of giving have changed with many more donating by direct debit - due particularly to the impact of Covid-19 but either method is very welcome! Last year the average number of monthly envelopes was 54, while the average number of direct debits was 46.

Other income includes dividends from invested bequests. In 2022 we received £4628. Another much appreciated source is the mid-week meetings yielding £351.

The Missionary Committee also administers the Discretionary Fund. This is regularly funded by annual ground rents, but we also received a very generous legacy from the estate of the Late Miss Barbara Hunter. From this fund we distributed £2 500 by way of Grants of Encouragement and grants to other Mission Agencies.

Thank you to all who give to and pray for our Missionary Families.

Eric Hammond

We(e) Care to share

We(e) care to share is a homely practical ministry, facilitated by a WhatsApp group and carried out in love as we provide 8 meals for a family when a new baby is born. It is a beautiful ministry to be part of, and all it takes is providing and delivering a meal when a new baby arrives. This can be homemade, bought or takeaway, each meal may be different, but each meal is equally a blessing to those who provide and those who receive. Five babies were born in this reporting period Sept 2022-August 2023, but we have been busy since then!

Hazel Neale

CRÈCHE

We thank God that we are blessed with an ever-growing group of pre-schoolers, toddlers and babies. It's great to watch the children enjoying their time playing and developing friendships. New soft play blocks were introduced and these have been a big hit, especially with the older kids.

I am very thankful for all the helpers who volunteer throughout the year. Without your dedication and continued support this important ministry could not run, so thank you all.

Emma Moore

CHATTERBOX

Chatterbox started on 2nd February 2022, and we experienced lower numbers than previous years. On 6th April we had our Easter trail which as usual everyone enjoyed. Instead of our June trip to Peter Pan's we decided to hold a teddy bears picnic in the halls and each child received a copy of The Queen's Jubilee book. We also held our ladies' night with food and crafts to end our year.

Chatterbox restarted again on 21st September 2022 and again we noticed lower numbers attending than pre COVID, but we enjoyed more time to talk to the parents and get to know them a little better. We finished the year off with our Christmas party on 7th December 2022 with a visit from Santa and books for the children.

We restarted on 11th January 2023 and we again held our Easter trail on 29th March which is always a joy to watch the children walk around the inside of the church building. We held our ladies' night on the 2nd of June which was crafts, games and supper and then we returned for our annual trip to Peter Pan's, this finished our year off and we were scheduled to restart on 13th September 2023. We thank God for each parent/carer and the children that they bring along each week and we pray that their time with us is a blessing to them.

Patricia McGuire

CLICK

Spring 2022 marked 5 years since CLICK began. We could not have for-seen what would transpire in those 5 years. We had planned to make it through the Bible using the Gospel Project material in 3 years, instead we were just getting to Revelation in the autumn of 2023. We have been really encouraged to see all our regular attenders returning after the pandemic disruption and new families coming along. Please pray that we would be good and faithful servants with the blessings that God has given. It has been a joy to see the P7 group move on to Youth Bible Class and Youth Fellowship and to welcome new P1 children. We are thankful to parents for their support

and encouragement in sending their children as well as many who serve as leaders. We have about 75 leaders and junior helpers taking part throughout the year. As a children's ministry team, we are very grateful for each one of them.

We have tried to address some of the concerns of our teams by incorporating an additional team to prepare for the church services at Christmas and children's day. This has reduced each team from 7 to 6 weeks in the coming year. A special thanks is due to those who have used their musical talents to make the children's services opportunities to glorify God to the best of our ability and to encourage extended families to join us for worship.

Jesus admonished his disciples to let the children come to him. Please pray that within our church family, we would obey Him.

On Behalf of:

Jonny Cousins, Cathy Hamilton, Mark Kent, Catherine McClatchey, Diane McClelland
children's ministry team

BROWNIES

From January to May 2023, our devotions were on the 'Trail of the Real Jesus' as told in the gospels. The girls listened well and engaged well.

The Brownies enjoyed having the Guiding girls come one night to play with board games they had made and to score their favourite game!

Other evenings included making bird feeders, an informative talk from the Fire Service, games, crafts, a talent night and a recycle night.

We finished Brownies on 9 May with a Nature Trail / Scavenger at Hoy's Meadow; it was lovely to remind the girls of the beauty of God's Creation all around us. We also thanked God for Brownies as this was the last night before moving to a new season and a new venture.

Leslie Dowey

Rainbows Report

September as always started with such an enthusiastic, bubbly bunch of 4 - 7-year-old girls!

When planning a programme, we always try to incorporate weekly activities to involve fun and friendship, thinking of others and health and spiritual wellbeing.

Crafts and baking are so popular! The girls just love to have something that they can make or bake to take home! Our devotions were based on "word of the week" and we took a word each week e.g., "love". We discussed it as to how we could practice it and what God would want us to do about it.

Thanks so much to Kirsty-Lee who came and spoke to the girls and distributed Bibles to our new recruits and also Caroline Proctor who came along to see the girls and filled shoeboxes. She also showed us a video of this worthwhile work and how the boxes are distributed.

Our Christmas project once again was supporting the food bank and we are so grateful to parents who donated so generously. After we finished with a night at Peter Pan's for Christmas we recommenced in January where we spent two weeks learning Makaton with Faith Vennard and the girls were amazing at picking it up so quickly.

Spring was taken up with celebrating dates such as Valentines Day, Mother's Day and Easter and this involved lots of crafting! We had a few healthy weeks involving physical activities, testing our senses and a special night for our spiritual health when Laura

Gilpin came back to speak to the girls.

After Easter break, we went for a scavenger hunt in Edenvilla and our final night ended with a Coronation party to celebrate our new King, Charles III.

We are comprised of a wonderful team and thanks goes to them for such a successful unit, Lisa Knipe, Jane Knipe, Rachel Weir, Bobbie Wilson and Molly Lundy. Thanks also for the continued support of our enabling elder Philip Patterson, and Cecil Hynes who is so accommodating each week.

Please continue to pray for us as we move forward from Rainbow Guides to Eden Girls over the next few months.

If you would like to join us, then please do as we would love to see you!

We meet on a Tuesday 6:15pm - 7:30pm ages nursery - P4.

Psalm 127 v 3

Louise Irwin

THE BOYS BRIGADE ALL SECTIONS

As we review the work of another year, we have to express our gratitude for the way the Lord has blessed and guided our company. Post covid our numbers have remained steady with 118 boys in our company.

Anchor Boys enjoyed weekly activities of bible quizzes, sword drills, memory verses, team games, group work, football, badge classes and guest speakers. They enjoyed superhero and pizza evenings and a trip to Peter Pan's for their Christmas outing.

Thursday evenings are action packed for Juniors with devotions, badge class and sports. Juniors took part in a variety of Battalion events and enjoyed their annual trip to Kilkeel in May.

Company & Senior Section boys were working hard towards their President's badge and Duke of Edinburgh award.

BB camp this year was in Dawlish. Over 55 boys and officers enjoyed good weather. We visited the local towns and made good use of the camp site facilities.

Our annual display was held in March. The inspecting officer was Mr Philip Hartin. The boys put on a varied programme that was enjoyed by parents and friends.

Finally, to the ministerial team, Mr John Crozier, our Enabling Elder for his interest and encouragement, Cecil Hynes and Mark Hobby, the security team and all our friends in the congregation – Many Thanks.

Tell your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children to another generation. Joel 1:3

Stephen Hunter

YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

In 2022 we worked through Philippians. We try to split the teaching between ourselves and lots of gifted church people.

When we aren't on a series, it is our joy to spend time playing games, eating, and

hanging out with our young people.

2022 concluded with a Christmas dinner, masterfully crafted by Elma and her team. This is a night where we can enjoy good food together, Secret Santa and the prestigious YF Awards.

For the first time since Covid we were able to have a YF weekend! During our time at the Faith Mission Centre, we thought about 'The Gospel', spending three sessions breaking down what it is and what it means for us. We were thankful to have Andrew Moorcroft as our speaker.

We ended the year with the annual BBQ at the Gilpin house. To officially celebrate the year of YF, we journeyed down to Emerald Park for a fun-filled day of rollercoasters, food and fellowship.

We currently have 3 leaders: Elise McClelland, Richard Gilpin, Matthew Winter. Ellie Jane has come on board for the incoming year! It is our prayer that our young people can grow to know Jesus better and love Him more. Please pray for them and for us as leaders.

Matthew Winter

Senior C.E.Fellowship 2022-2023

The Senior C.E. Fellowship Society continued to meet, as far as possible, on the first and third Mondays of each month.

This year's programme consisted mostly of Bible Study. We continued our studies in the book of Exodus which we had started just before the pandemic.

In November we were invited to join another local Society in the Fergus Hall. This took the form of a carol service which was enjoyed by all present.

In December there was the usual work night. This year we helped in the preparation of Christmas cards for distribution to members of the congregation.

In February we had a return visit from Mr. David Little who is a missionary to Eastern Europe and is presently based in Greece. He has been with us on previous occasions and his work is always followed with great interest. We invited St. Marks' Society to join with us on that evening and the meeting ended with supper.

April saw us reach the conclusion of our studies in the book of Exodus. At the end of the month, we hosted the local union Presidential Rally which is normally held in our church hall. An interesting programme was arranged, and this was followed by supper. It is always good to renew fellowship with the other C.E. Societies.

Many thanks to Mr Cecil Hynes who helped prepare the room for us on different occasions.

Anyone wishing to join us on a Monday evening will be made most welcome. We meet from 8pm-9pm in the Session room or Coffee Bar area.

Rosemary Crozier

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

We praise God for another busy year in PW despite the continuing restrictions imposed by Covid. Our meetings were limited in the early part of the year, but the ladies still managed to meet and enjoy fellowship on a few occasions in March, April and May. The PW committee met in January to plan future meetings and the election of a new

committee was scheduled for the meeting in March.

In March our speakers were Judith and Avisai Suarez who shared about the challenges Covid had brought to their work. During this time, they have been working with Neighbours International reaching out to ethnic groups.

The Annual Spring Conference was once again held in our church in April 22 and April 23. One of the guest speakers was Mrs Charlotte Curran whose topic was "Peace That Remains" Our thanks to our musical and sound team for supporting these events.

In May Jill Gowan was elected as the new leader, and Doris Young as Treasurer. A programme for the new season in September was agreed. Ernest and Isobel Carrick were our guest speakers who work with Helping Others Worldwide. Over the last twenty-two years they have filled many containers for distribution worldwide. Ernest told of how God had supplied every need in miraculous ways and on many occasions.

The Carrick's were overwhelmed by the number and quality of the knitted items provided by the PW ladies.

A big thanks to all the retiring members of committee who have given long and faithful service to the PW.

To Margaret Hindmarch as leader, Nanette McKimm as Secretary, Hazel McClelland as treasurer, Rosemary Conkey and Elizabeth Anderson for the distribution of Wider World and Rachelle Brown for the issue of cards. We wish them every blessing.

Our theme for the new season starting in September was "Deeper Together" and our speaker on this topic was Mabel Brush. Mabel challenged us as members to consider how we can move on to develop stronger mature relationships with each other and reminded us of God's commandment to love him and our neighbours. She reminded us of the great gifts of the spirit, joy and love. and suggested how we could put these into practice.

In November Carolyn Donnelly shared her own story of her journey caring for her husband with

Dementia. She provided a real insight into the many different forms of Dementia and the challenges both sufferers and carers face. Carolyn shared particular scriptures which have strengthened her throughout her journey such as Psalm 31 "having hope in the Lord."

Christmas heralded our Christmas Special. Gillian Johnston sang solos and talked about how God has worked in her life. She also enabled us to focus on the real meaning of Christmas. Carols were sung and a special supper was enjoyed by all.

During the next six months of the programme, we continued to enjoy a variety of different speakers and topics. In January Hazel Busby bravely shared about her journey with cancer and how God has been present with her on every step of the journey. We had an update about the work of Christians against Poverty and at Easter Keith Lindsay (Acre International) shared his testimony, and how God was continuing to build his church in unlikely places. To end the season, we enjoyed an outing to Newcastle including a visit to The Crafty Fox in Killinchy.

We have been greatly blessed and encouraged by our speakers and also encouraged to see younger women actively participate in PW. Thank you, to all who pray for us, for the hard work of the committee members and those who help on the sidelines, Kirsty Lee, Cecil and Mark.

Please pray that God will encourage more women of all ages to join us on a Tuesday once a month.

Everyone is welcome.

Christine Doherty (Secretary)

Shine Cafe

Shine Cafe, a Café on Friday mornings for international ladies in our community, has been operating for 2 years. Since September 2021 we have had approximately 40 ladies coming along from 15 different nationalities.

Each week we provide free tea and coffee and homemade bakes for the ladies to eat, giving an opportunity to chat and get to know them. Each week we also tell a short bible story and give the ladies a bible verse on a card or bookmark or other creative formats to take home with them. Once or twice a month we do a craft activity as well.

We also do a "mums and kids cafe" once or twice a year. When we hold the cafe over the holidays and invite mums and their children along. This has been very well received by both mothers and the children.

This is now the start of year 3 for Shine Cafe and we thank God for his blessing on this ministry and to all the ladies who come along and our team of 12 ladies from First Portadown who are involved with me.

Judith Suarez.

Men's Prayer Time

September 2022 - August 2023

Each Wednesday morning a group of men usually 15-20 of us meet in the 'Blue' room to have a time of prayer. This is from 7.30am- 8am and is followed by a time of fellowship where those who are able meet at cafe Eden for breakfast. This year we have been greatly blessed and encouraged to have a number of younger men join us as we pray for our church, for our town, those who are sick in the fellowship and for the world we live in. One of the many things we thought about and prayed for this year was Revival, in particular the 1859 Revival which swept across our province.

Thanks to those men who faithfully come each week. We would love to see more men joining us on a Wednesday morning and you would be most welcome.

"do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

Philippians 4:6

Jon Hunter

Edenderry Fellowship and Luncheon Club.

Once again, we had a good year of meetings with different speakers and singers, which were a great blessing to us all.

John Porter from Ballymoney, started our year singing and speaking to us.

We also had a visit from the McCracken's in Claremorris. David Irwin from Craigavon Christian Youth, Dennis Flanagan and George Barkley from Randallstown and others as well.

Because the fellowship makes their own stew, money which is gathered is shared among visiting speakers. And we can support our missionaries as well.

And could I say a big thank you to our team of chefs and helpers, who do all the hard work of preparing and serving the stew.

For our annual outing, we went to the Coleraine area, calling at Glenwherry Presbyterian Church for morning tea and coffee, where the Rev Trevor Kane, our former assistant Minister, is now in charge.

We then had our evening meal at the Lodge Hotel in Coleraine. A great day was enjoyed by all.

If you would like to join us for the Luncheon Club, it is at 1:30 PM and the fellowship meeting follows at 2:30 PM and we meet on the last Thursday of each month from September until the end of May.

And you will be made very welcome.

Cecil Hynes

FP Wheels Club

FP Wheels Club was formed pre-Covid 19. One of the central aims was to give men in the church family with an interest in cars, motorcycles and other modes of transport, the opportunity to meet and enjoy fellowship together.

We meet on the 3rd Tuesday of each month in the Coffee Dock; meetings begin with a "Thought for the day," followed by a prayer, and conclude with supper provided by the men (or their wives!!). This is a great opportunity for informal chat and fellowship. A nucleus of 15-20 men attends each month. The Covid-19 period had been one of challenge and change for FP Wheels Club. Whilst we were unable to meet in person, it was important to keep in touch via WhatsApp.

Since its inception, members have benefited from a number of guest speakers/ visits:

Guest Speakers

* Drs Gilbert Carson and Charlie Shepherd and Nurse Practitioner, Patricia Burke (Men's Health)

* PSNI Traffic Branch (PC Kiera Cassells)

* Professional Car Valet

- * Dr Andrew Collins (Psychiatrist / Christian Counsellor)
- * Role of a Loss Adjuster (Colin McDowell)
- * Road Safety (Ian Glass)

Visits

- * Go-Karting
 - * Private motor collections
 - * Gilfresh Business Plant (Kenneth and Mary Gilpin)
 - * Tallaght University Hospital, Dublin (Rev Mark Proctor)
 - * Shelborne Motors - Petrol v Electric Cars (Richard Ward)
- We also enjoyed quizzes and lively debate on topical issues.

With specific reference to 2022/23, to date, visiting speakers included:

- * Margaret Beattie (Portadown Physio Clinic)
- * Paul Whittle (Whittle's Car Services)

The December meeting is always a "Christmas Special "

Looking ahead to the new year, we plan to visit some additional private collections of cars/ motorbikes/ transport memorabilia. Weather permitting, we will enjoy trips out in the Spring.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the men for their continued support and attendance at the monthly meetings. We unite together to thank God for all his goodness during the past year.

New members are always welcome.

David Gillespie

First Presbyterian Church Portadown

STEWARDSHIP AND FINANCE

Stewardship and Finance

Generosity encouraged

The church teaches its members to look to the Bible for advice about giving. God promises that those who give generously and cheerfully are not only a blessing to others but are richly blessed themselves.

“Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.”
2 Corinthians 9: 7-8

The Code of our Presbyterian Church in Ireland refers to “contributions by the people, in a spirit of generous and responsible stewardship for the work of the church.”

The work of our church is almost entirely supported by giving from our congregation. It is a great help if our members contribute regularly, using one of our envelope schemes.

What to give to?

Weekly **Freewill Offering** (F.W.O.) supports our general fund, which finances the day-to-day work of our church, including stipend, other staff costs, our heat, light and insurances and all our other running costs. This also funds the assessments that are levied by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

Our **Property Fund** is for the maintenance of our meeting house, our church halls and the manse. It is used primarily for major projects.

The **Missionary Fund** supports the missionary families connected with our church, working at home and abroad, and also passes on gifts received for the benefit of other missionary workers. Monthly envelopes are available and these allow contributors to nominate a beneficiary. If not stated, allocation is carried out by our Missionary Committee.

How to give

Weekly envelopes are available for Freewill Offering and Property Fund. Monthly envelopes are available for Missionary Fund. Alternatively, you may prefer to contribute by monthly standing order from your bank or building society. Simply ask the treasurer for a form.

A gift to the church in your will

The work of the church has been greatly assisted by many generous gifts in the wills of members. You can see the enduring value of such gifts in the Bequest pages, later in this report. A gift to the church in your will is exempt from Inheritance Tax.

The Old Age Fund and The Presbyterian Women's Fund

The General Assembly seeks to provide a ministry among older members.

The object of the **Old Age Fund** and the **Presbyterian Women's Fund** is to help aged or infirm members of our church. Financial support may be provided in the form of a quarterly grant, or a one-off grant in special circumstances.

Applicants who meet **some** of the following criteria may be eligible:

- living at home
- income less than £12,000 per annum
- in receipt of Income Support, Attendance Allowance or Pension Credit
- savings less than £16,000
- under the pastoral care of a congregation of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland
- not receiving significant financial assistance from other family members
- having medical needs that require extra expenditure.

Please speak to our Minister if you would like to make an application.

GIFT AID

Gift Aid is a Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs scheme that is of great benefit to our church.

How Gift Aid works

The church can claim back the basic rate tax already paid on money received from individuals who have paid UK income tax or capital gains tax. No minimum contribution is required, you can cancel at any time and tax can even be recovered retrospectively.

All that is required is that the donor must pay tax at least equal to the amount of tax being reclaimed and must give their offering through one of our envelope schemes

Example

Basic rate income tax is 20%. If you give £8 to the church, this is treated as a gift made net of basic rate tax. The gross amount is £10 and so the church is able to reclaim the £2 tax .

Have you signed a Gift Aid form?

A leaflet is available in the vestibule, giving more information and a Gift Aid Declaration, or you can just fill in your details below and pass this to the Gift Aid Treasurer.

GIFT AID DECLARATION

Name:

Address:

.....

.....

Post Code:

Date:

I want First Presbyterian Church Portadown to treat all donations that I make from the date of this declaration until I notify you otherwise as Gift Aid donations.

You must pay income tax and/or Capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that the Church reclaims on your donations in the tax year.

Gift Aid Treasurer

Valerie Clarke
c/o First Portadown Presbyterian
Church Office
25 Watson Street
Portadown
Co. Armagh
BT63 5AQ
Telephone: 028 3839 3773

