

# 29th November 2020

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Registered with The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland NIC104317



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## Services

**Sunday 29th November 2020**

**11am Rev Reuben McCormick**

**Sunday 6th December 2020**

**11am Rev Reuben McCormick**

<https://www.youtube.com/GlengormleyPresbyterianChurch>

### Forthcoming Events

**SUNDAY SERVICES:** In line with current Government restrictions services on Sundays 29th November and 6th December will be streamed online only. Links can be found on our webpage, Facebook page and YouTube channel. We hope that these restrictions will be lifted so that our services can resume in person on Sunday 13th December.

**CHRISTMAS SERVICES:** Your elder should soon be in touch with those who have expressed interest in attending church services in person. They will give you 2 dates - one is a Sunday Morning service either in December or early January; the other is for a Christmas Service on either 13th or 20th December. As seats are very limited, please let your elder know if you cannot attend any of these services.

### Discipleship Events

**MODERATOR'S WEEKEND OF PRAYER - 27th-29th**

**November:** We will be holding 2 additional Zoom Prayer Meetings this weekend:

Friday 27th November at 9:30 - 10pm

Saturday 28th November at 9:30 - 10am

As well as our normal Sunday Zoom Prayer Meeting at 8pm. Access can be gained with usual meeting ID. If you are unable to join, please use the prayer points at the end of the announcement to help you pray at home.

### Church Notices

**PRESBYTERIAN HERALD:** What a strange year this has been - we're looking forward to Christmas and those who subscribe to the Herald will just have received /

are soon to receive their Easter issue which couldn't be delivered before lockdown. Publication of The Herald will resume in January 2021 and only four seasonal issues of the magazine will be produced through the year, instead of the usual 10. There will be no subscription charges in 2021 for those who subscribed this year as there have been no publications since the Easter one. If you would be interested in receiving The Herald for the first time please, make contact with Lesley Bell or access it online <https://www.presbyterianireland.org/Resources/Presbyterian-Herald/Downloads/2020-Presbyterian-Herald-Downloads.aspx>

**SAFE CHURCH:** As you know GPC has been signed up as a Safe Church for anyone experiencing Domestic Abuse. Wednesday 25th November was White Ribbon Day when the plight of adults and children trapped in abusive intimate relationships was highlighted. We would like to draw your attention to Domestic Abuse Awareness Webinars hosted by our council and are open to anyone in the congregation. Most sessions are morning or afternoon, which won't suit many, but please check the link and speak to Lesley Bell, Davy Mullan or Hazel Kyle if you're interested and want more information:

Northern Ireland: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/onus-safe-place-webinar-northern-ireland-tickets-126831886587> (funded by Communities Fund for Northern Ireland)

Antrim & Newtownabbey: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/onus-safe-place-webinar-antrim-newtownabbey-borough-council-tickets-114929274554> (funded by Antrim & Newtownabbey PCSP)

Davy Mullan attended The Safe Place Seminar last year and sent this information:

The **Safe Place Seminar** was an eye opener. It was full of information:

- ⇒ The PSNI respond on average every 17 minutes to call about abuse. Mostly from women and children.
- ⇒ Women's Aid assisted 654 women and 421 children.
- ⇒ 6308 adults and 5966 children accessed community-based outreach.

(the statistics above are in relation to the year 2017-2018 and since beginning of COVID are much higher). Using a clip from Coronation Street, it highlighted that violence is not the only form of abuse. Making someone feel useless and undervalued is coercive behaviour and makes their life a misery. The people who are suffering find it difficult to ask for help and to leave an abusive relationship.

This seminar makes you realise the importance of providing a safe place for people to request help. It also advises that we need to be prepared to offer assistance to someone seeking help and to provide them with the contact information of experienced professionals. If they refuse help, it is important that we respect their decision. We must also make them aware that we care, and are there to offer support at a later date.

It is important that we are informed so we can offer this assistance correctly and the best way is to attend the online seminar. I encourage you to sign up for this.

## Prayer Diary

### Sunday 29 November

Please pray for the Moderator as many of his engagements are either postponed or carried out by alternative means – remotely or online. Today he shares the livestream service from Abbey Monkstown, marking the 50th anniversary of the opening of their building.

Pray for our ministers, some of whom are discouraged during the current restrictions. Pray for ways we can build them up during December.

### Monday 30 November

Derek and Jane French (global mission workers, Spain) Give thanks for six new people who have joined Bilbao International Church since September. Pray that they will settle in well and feel at home.

Andamio (the publishing branch of GBU – student ministry in Spain) has published a new resource for 7-14 year olds to use during December. Pray that through it, many will come to faith in Jesus. Pray too for Derek and Jane as they continue to serve.

### Tuesday 1 December

PCI has 16 deaconesses most of whom serve in congregations. Pray for each deaconess as they continue to work and seek opportunities to share the gospel and encourage people in their faith, despite Covid-19 restrictions. Pray for wisdom and guidance in all they do. Pray especially for Heather McCracken (Belfast Health and Social Care Trust) and Joanne Dunlop (Antrim Area Hospital) for encouragement, stamina, good health and safety.

### Wednesday 2 December

Russia - Pray for the witness of the Christian church during this uncertain time – that Christians would be able to show God's love and care to others, especially to those suffering due to the Covid-19 situation.

St Petersburg Christian University, Russia - Pray that students will continue to grow, both academically and spiritually. Pray for health and protection for staff, students and their families. Pray too for the financial situation at the university, thanking God for a slight improvement.

### Thursday 3 December

Through grants, PCI supports 13 community outreach workers serving in congregations supporting local mission. Give thanks for each worker and pray for wisdom and guidance as they continue to adapt and develop their ministry, whilst complying with all Covid-19 guidelines. Pray too for the people the workers are in contact with, and that during this advent and Christmas season, many will accept Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

### Friday 4 December

Social Witness - Pray for staff teams as they plan for Christmas – particularly for the special visiting arrangements for family and friends. Give thanks for the patience and understanding of visitors as they struggle with restricted visiting regimes.

Local government - Pray for councillors and council staff across the island, especially in the run up to Christmas as they continue to provide services and support to local communities in these challenging times.

### Saturday 5 December

Pray for the secretary of the General Council, Rev Trevor Gribben and its convener, the very Rev Dr Noble McNeely, as the Council meeting re-scheduled for December has had to be postponed once again until January owing to enhanced government restrictions. Pray for all ministers as they respond to the everchanging legislation, while trying to meet the needs of their congregations.

Fourteen people have applied for ordained ministry this year. The application process runs through until Easter, with placements, interviews, and assignments. Pray that the Lord would guide and give wisdom to applicants and interviewers as together they seek the Lord's will.



# At Home for Christmas?

**MODERATOR'S WEEKEND OF PRAYER**  
**27-29 NOVEMBER 2020**

## Let's Pray... **Weekend Extra**

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**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."

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### **Friday 27 November**

#### **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.

## **Saturday 28 November**

### **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.

## **Sunday 29 November**

### **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.