

EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

ANNUAL REPORTS 2025

Presented at the Presbytery Day Conference on 9th May 2026
Charity Number: 1000252



EVANGELICAL
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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PRESBYTERY ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE

Rev Robert Beckett (Moderator), Rev Robert Johnston, Rev John Roger, Mr Mervyn Langtry (Clerk)

COMPOSITION & MEETINGS

Presbytery had a total of 27 members at on 31 December 2025. There were 7 meetings with an average attendance of 22.

ANNUAL PRESBYTERY DAY CONFERENCE

The Conference was held on 10 May 2025 at Crumlin EPC. Approximately 120 members and friends attended. Rev Robert McCollum (Jnr) was the guest speaker, with his talks focussed on the theme “The Boy Jesus in the Temple”.

Rev John Roger, the outgoing Moderator, provided an apt review of the year. After this, the new Moderator, Rev Dr Robert Beckett, was installed. His Moderatorial address, based on Revelation 2: 1-11 and entitled “The State of the Church and Nation Today”, was both challenging and thought-provoking.

MODERATORIAL DUTIES

The Moderator presided at Presbytery meetings and the Presbytery Arrangements Committee. He represented the denomination at the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) and the 2025 Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

COMMISSIONS OF PRESBYTERY

A regular visitation commission consisting of Rev G Burke (Convenor), Mr A Lucas and Mr H Gibson completed a visitation in the Groomsport congregation. A further visitation was carried out in the autumn, this time to Stranmillis, with Rev M Hobson (Convenor), Mr D Tinsley and Mr A MacLeod as members of the commission. PAC acted as a Commission of Presbytery over the summer and winter recess periods.

COMMITTEES

All Standing and Special Committees met as required by the Code or business at hand

OTHER

It was with heartfelt sadness that Presbytery marked the passing of a former member, Robert Bruce McKenzie (Ballyclare), on 28th October 2025 at the age of 102 years. We are grateful for every remembrance of him. In January, at Presbytery’s behest, the Moderator and Rev A Lucas attended the Synod of the Christian Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. In May, Presbytery members received training in support of their ongoing role as the denomination’s trustees. A most encouraging

Ministers and Officebearers Conference was held in March and an Officebearers Half Day of Prayer took place in November. In February, Presbytery had the pleasure of installing John Roger as senior minister in the Stranmillis congregation in succession to Rev Burke. In November, Rev Mark Johnston intimated his intention to retire from the pastoral ministry in Groomsport at the end of January 2026 and Rev Hobson was appointed to act as Interim Moderator.

CONGREGATIONAL STATISTICS

Membership	BC	CC	CR	EW	FN	GP	KN	OM	ST	Total
Jan 2025	43	15	45	14	17	36	54	33	95	352
Dec 2025	44	18	45	14	17	33	59	29	101	360
New Members	2	6	2	0	1	0	7	1	9	28
Deaths	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	4	1	7
Disjunctions/Resignations	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	8
Baptisms	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	9
Sun AM Attendance	64	24	51	15	22	37	45	51	139	448
Sun PM Attendance	45	18	35	15	17	24	39	32	100	325
Communion Attendance	36	18	37	14	19	39	33	29	79	304
Bible Study & Prayer Meeting	18	10	20	10	11	16	12	14	35	146
Sunday School	16	0	8	0	0	8	14	11	37	94
Other Children's Work / Youth Work	36	10	10	0	0	40	27	32	45	200
Parent Toddler Group	10	0	10	0	0	16	0	0	22	58
Marriages	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	3

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Presbytery give thanks to God for His gracious provision to enable our congregations to continue in the work of the Gospel during 2025.
2. That Presbytery thank the Moderator for his diligence in attending to all the duties of his office throughout the year.
3. That Presbytery thank all those who have represented it at various events during the past year.
4. That Presbytery remembers in prayer all those across our congregations touched by bereavement in 2025.

5. That Presbytery thanks all Interim Moderators, Assessor Elders, Commission and Committee members for their diligence and commitment throughout 2025.
6. That Presbytery call on the church to pray that we, as a denomination, might know much blessing and encouragement in the days ahead.

INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS COMMITTEE

Revs. M. Hobson (Convenor), A. Lucas and J. Roger

'Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain.' (1 Cor. 15 v. 58)

As a small denomination we are encouraged to have a number of our church members serving the Lord in the work of International Missions, as well as many others who are known to us.

During 2025 the following EPC members have been serving in International Missions:

- Musa & Pamela Gaiya, Nigeria
- Peter & Neus Grier, North Africa
- David & Olwyn Gordon, ACTS
- Andrew & Eunice Moody, Uganda
- Ben & Esther Smith, Moldova
- Christoph & Jackie Thiede, S E Asia

It is important that we regularly remember them and their families in prayer, that they will be kept safe and well, and the Lord will richly use their work for His glory and the furtherance of His kingdom. It is good for us as a church to look beyond our own needs and remember the worldwide church.

There is a good level of giving to the work of missions across the denomination supporting different individuals and organisations in their work.

We have been able to continue to use the legacy for International Missions left by Hugh and Noelle Williamson. Two missionary families were given bursaries to enable them to attend conferences, and further such help will be available in the future.

Our regular denominational giving to International Missions currently goes to the work of the Free Church of Scotland in Peru, India, and South Africa.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Give thanks for missionaries from the EPC serving overseas, and pray for the Lord to uphold them and use them for the furtherance of His kingdom.
2. For a continued interest and vision for the work of God's kingdom around the world.
3. That the Lord would raise up missionaries in the EPC.

PUBLIC MORALS COMMITTEE

Rev Robert Johnston (Convenor), Mr Wallace Thompson, Mr Harold Gibson

Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! - Isaiah 5:20-2

Once again, as was the case last year, we write this report at a time of growing international tension. 2025 saw “wars and rumours of wars” on many occasions, The recent outbreak of war in Iran and across the Middle East region has sent further shock waves around the world and created fresh fears for the future.

As Christians, we are naturally perturbed by these events, but we must resist the temptation to ask the question so often posed by the BBC - “How worried should we be?” We should remember, as we highlighted in our 2024 report, that God is in control. While it is prudent to keep up to date with the news, we must above all seek divine wisdom. Sadly, across the western world, and especially in Europe, there are few in positions of leadership who have that understanding. Also, while we will have our own political views on what is happening in our nation and across the world, our primary goal must be the propagation of the Gospel and the promotion of Biblical standards of morality in society.

Closer to home, Northern Ireland continues to enjoy its fragile peace, and we are blessed with levels of Gospel witness which have long since vanished in the rest of the UK. For this we are thankful. However, the general direction of travel is alarming. It is taking us further down the road of secularism and godlessness, and while this is evident across society, it is particularly disheartening to see the PUL (Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist) community determined to turn its back on its rich evangelical heritage. The result is the ongoing breakdown of the traditional structures of society and the mess which ensues from it. A generation is growing up which knows little or nothing of the Christian faith. There are mission fields on the doorsteps of all our churches.

As a committee, we are overwhelmed by the range and complexities of the issues we face. We would greatly appreciate input from across our denomination from those with expertise in key areas such as education and health.

Some of the subjects from 2025 are as follows -

SUNDAY TRADING IN BELFAST

The assault on the Lord’s Day continues apace. In May, we were both concerned and saddened that Belfast City Council planned to allow larger shops in the city centre to open on Sunday mornings for a six week trial period by giving Belfast “resort status”. Those who supported this further extension of Sunday opening argued that it would revitalise the heart of the city on Sundays, with a particular focus

on tourism. However, some politicians, retailers and trades unionists expressed concern for the rights of shop workers, including the right to a family life. We understand that shops in several European countries are closed on Sundays for this very reason.

We issued a statement on this matter and, while mentioning workers' rights, we stressed that, as evangelical Christians, there was an even more compelling argument against Sunday opening. We stated that as Sunday is the Lord's Day, it should be set apart from the other six days as a day of worship and rest. We said, "All commercial activity should therefore be reduced to an absolute minimum and families encouraged to attend church and spend quality time together".

Our statement last May was quickly picked up by the Belfast Telegraph who published only the part which focused on the rights of workers. This edited coverage was unhelpful in that it led to some unfair and misplaced criticism of EPC from those who wrongly felt we had weakened on the Lord's Day. We also published an article on the issue, along with one on the Sunday marathon, on the EPC website.

The Sunday opening proposal was later rejected by the City Council, but its proponents are continuing to push their agenda.

SUPREME COURT RULING ON DEFINITION OF SEX

We welcomed the ruling in the Supreme Court in London that "sex" in the Equality Act 2010 refers to biological sex, not gender identity. This means that the Act's protections, including those related to single-sex spaces, are determined by a person's sex at birth, regardless of whether they have a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC).

While the 2010 Act does not apply in NI, it will have implications here, and these continue to be considered by local politicians, the NI Human Rights Commission and other relevant agencies.

RACIAL UNREST

We sought to offer a clear Biblical response to the racial unrest which broke out in Ballymena, Belfast and other areas in June. Our statement was not without its critics, but it was very warmly welcomed by many within the EPC and beyond.

SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES IN NI

In June, the Supreme Court heard an appeal from parents against an earlier Appeal Court decision that religious education and collective worship in NI schools is legal. It delivered its ruling on 19 November 2025, when it found that the current arrangements - which are shaped by a broadly Christian ethos - fail to meet the human-rights requirement of being "objective, critical and pluralistic". While this has clear implications, it seems that, for now, not much, if anything, will actually change.

Despite some of the headlines, this is not about removing RE from schools. The court explicitly stated, “No one is suggesting that religious education should not be provided in schools in Northern Ireland.” It is also not about marginalising Christianity. The court recognised that “historically and today, Christianity is the most important religion in Northern Ireland”. The Education Minister, who is considering the ruling, has also offered reassurance. However, there are dangers in all of this, and it is a case of “watch this space”.

CALEB FOUNDATION BRIEFING MEETING

Wallace and I attended a useful briefing session for public morals committees of various churches organised by the Caleb Foundation on Monday 20 October in Lisburn Independent Methodist Church. The speaker was Callum Webster of the Christian Institute, who outlined a range of relevant issues. It was also good to share fellowship with folks from the other churches.

BBC

Through the Caleb Foundation we have ongoing contact with the BBC. While we are frustrated at the increasing restrictions on Thought for the Day on Radio Ulster, we are grateful that Rev Gareth Burke and Mr Wallace Thompson were featured on the slot on several occasions in 2025.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Please make public morals issues a matter for sustained prayer. We would suggest the following -
 - Pray for all our politicians in local government, in the restored Assembly/Executive and in Westminster.
 - Pray that our Christian politicians, especially those who hold office as Ministers in the NI Executive or as members of Assembly Committees, will be given much grace, wisdom and courage.
 - Pray for all who are involved in lobbying on moral issues, and particularly the Caleb Foundation, the Christian Institute, CARE and Affinity. The Caleb Foundation has specific contact with local politicians and the media, and the Christian Institute provides a wealth of material on a wide range of issues.
 - Pray for Christians who are under increasing pressure in their careers and businesses.
 - Pray for ongoing liaison and dialogue with BBC NI.
 - Pray for Christians in sport, including managers, chaplains and players.
 - Pray for teachers and school children who face many challenges and are being exposed to the transgender and associated agendas.
 - Pray against all efforts to denigrate the Lord’s Day.
 - Pray for the Public Morals Committee as it deals with difficult and often contentious and complex issues.
2. We encourage all our members to contact the Committee to offer advice, expertise or views on any issue they feel relevant. We also encourage our members, adherents and Sessions to write to newspapers on public morals issues where they feel it appropriate, and to respond to public consultations. It is also important for members and adherents to lobby their public representatives at every opportunity. Those opposed to the Word of God do this all the time. The more of us who speak out, the better. It is noticed - and it does make a difference.

TRAINING FOR THE MINISTRY & ADMISSIONS

Revs Mark G. Johnston (Convenor), Andrew Lucas, Messrs David Gordon, Colin Moore

The Training of the Ministry and Admissions Committee had a fairly quiet year in terms of expressions of interest in training for the ministry of our denomination. As mentioned in last year's report, in the early part of 2025, we were contacted by a young man who is currently studying for his undergraduate degree.

The Convenor of the Committee, met with him on several occasions to discuss the requirements of the Code for an application to be made to Presbytery for consideration for admission. Some of these requirements, not least the need to be in regular attendance in one of our churches, but also to be in membership of an EPC congregation for the stated minimum period, meant it was impractical for him to move forward with his enquiry at this stage. He expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to explore the possibility of serving with our church but indicated he would not be pursuing the matter any further at this time.

The annual EPC Ministers and Office-Bearers' Conference was held in Stranmillis EPC with Professor Warren Peel from Galway Reformed Presbyterian Church as the speaker. His ministry was profitable to all and the gathering provided a welcome opportunity for fellowship and mutual encouragement for the ministers, elders and deacons in our denomination.

We face a situation where several of our ministers have retired from the ministry over the past few years. It is imperative therefore that, as a denomination, we make it a matter of urgent and ongoing prayer that the Lord would raise up young men from within EPC ranks to train for, and undertake, the work of the ministry. In addition, as opportunity presents itself, we will continue to engage with, and evaluate appropriately, men from elsewhere to determine their suitability for service with us.

In the midst of all the challenges we are facing at this time in terms of raising up the next generation of preachers for our own denomination, we are all the more encouraged to cry out to the Lord of the harvest that he may 'thrust forth' his labourers into the harvest to gather all those he has foreordained to save.

As a Committee, we therefore continue to pray for the Lord's provision for the needs of our denomination and his blessing upon the life and labours of all those he has called into his service in our churches, not merely for the expansion of his church but, supremely, for the honour and glory of his name.

YOUTH COMMITTEE

*Revs Robert Johnston (Convenor) & Ethan McCarter, Samuel & Helen Jackson,
Andrew Johnston, Julie Johnston & Peter McCullough*

Youth Committee exists to assist camps, denominational youth outreach teams, Ignite, the Sunday School project and training of those who work with children and young people.

JUNIOR CAMP

From 28th June to 4th July, Junior Camp enjoyed a full week of God's blessing. We were once again in Regent House School in Newtownards, this year with 49 campers. Of the 28 girls and 21 boys; 15 were new to Camp. It is a big week for all involved, but perhaps especially for those who are away from home for the first time for a full seven days. The pastoral care on display amongst our leaders with the first-timers is a lovely thing to witness. The Lord Himself is at work, answering prayers regarding homesickness. Indeed, at camp answered prayer is bread and butter. The Lord's people faithfully pray and the Lord faithfully answers.

This year our main talks were on the theme of "Jesus and His disciples." These were shared out between a number of the more experienced leaders. We are pleased that God has given gifts and that they are put to good use in camp. Our doctrine talks were on the theme of "The Attributes of God." These were given on the level of our age group (8-11) and it was good to see our children learning much about God Himself. We also had the joy of attending worship at the Reformed Presbyterian Church (RPC) in Newtownards, where we have always received a warm welcome. Henry Berry once again gave the missionary presentation and challenge, this time on Mary Slessor - the children were on the edge of their seats. We also had John Watson speaking about Ben and Esther Smith in Moldova. Dorm times reinforce the teaching and seek to apply it further as we chat about what we have learned during the day. Some dorms enjoy very good and deep discussion and then pray together.

The week, as usual, was packed with activity: Hike to Scrabo tower, trip to Streamvale Farm, swimming, beach games and sand modelling, water games, a fairground day and a science spectacular! The campers also enjoy an afternoon shopping, and everyone looks forward to the last night talent show! Every day they get to go to the camp bank and then visit the bookstall and the tuckshop. Throughout the week we run tournaments for table-football and table tennis where the noise of supporters is immense. In the Connect 4 final - it's the suspense that keeps silent! We are, as ever, thankful to our team of cooks, who feed 70+ every mealtime and are always interacting with and encouraging the campers.

We had a strong team of leaders again this year, ably assisted by 3 junior helpers. It is our joy to lead a team of folk who are so committed to shepherding the boys and girls. We again enjoyed great unity and camaraderie. Every night a skeleton crew supervises the halls while the other leaders meet

together for devotions, feedback and planning for the next day. Hearing the team pray is very encouraging. At Junior Camp we have the privilege of seeing our leaders and our campers grow in the faith from year to year; in the leaders this is paralleled with a growth in usefulness and maturity and we thank the Lord for their commitment.

INTERS CAMP 2025

Inters Camp returned for another fantastic week in July 2025. We were blessed to have 38 young people to camp this year. Moyallon Centre was our venue again and provided a great base for us for the week. Campers and leaders alike were challenged and encouraged by our morning and evening meetings, and discussion groups. We enjoyed great weather this year, which allowed our activities to run as planned, including the much anticipated trip to Share Discovery Village in Fermanagh for watersports.

The campers thoroughly enjoyed a competitive week of team games, involving volleyball, tag rugby, ultimate frisbee, and rounders. We also had activities such as a tour of Tayto Castle, water sports, paintballing, 'What.3.Words' challenge around Armagh, and much more. We finished with the much anticipated Inters Social on the final night.

This year Amos Kennedy brought us an excellent series of talks on The Life of David, faithfully opening up the truth of God's Word. Amos walked us through the life of David, thinking about him as the unexpected king, a king after God's own heart, a chosen king, an imperfect king, and a shadow of the coming king in Jesus. The talks were really engaging, challenging the campers to consider their own relationship with Christ. In the evenings we enjoyed the missionary story of CT Studd, taking the same story which younger kids considered in the Sunday School Project, and digging a bit deeper thinking about the spiritual challenges and sacrifices that CT Studd made through his life as a missionary.

The talks were enthusiastically shared by Richard Beattie, Naomi Bleakly, Sam Parke and Scott Goodrich, teasing the story out on a series of cliffhangers. The sacrifice and commitment demonstrated by CT Studd, giving up a sporting career and even family relationships, really resonated with the campers. It also prompted interesting discussion and debate about rightness and wrongness of some of CT Studd's different decisions, and the practical outworkings of making such sacrifices. At the end of the week, we were pleased to have Ben Smith with us sharing about the work of Casa Mea in Moldova. The talks were inspiring and thought provoking for all. Discussions in dorm groups used questions from the talks to prompt meaningful discussions and searching questions.

This year also saw the launch of our range of Inters Camp exclusive merchandise, ranging from hoodies to t-shirts, water bottles to fashionable charms for the campers crocs (you may have to ask the campers for an explanation of what these are, just as we leaders had to ask the same question!). From every item sold we committed to making a small donation towards the work of Casa Mea, and as

a result of merchandise sales we were excited to be able to send a donation of £500 towards the work in Moldova.

Many preparations were made to ensure that every camper had a safe and enjoyable week at camp. We are thankful to God for each individual and were delighted to see campers returning from previous years. We are grateful for the dedicated care and attention given to all our young people by the leaders throughout the week. We must also thank the campers who were encouraging and welcoming to each other - as always we had a great Inters Camp community.

This year we had a strong team of 15 leaders and 4 cooks. A special thanks to David & Olwyn Gordon and their team of faithful helpers in the kitchen, who kept us well fed and watered throughout the week. Often a thankless task when working with young people who often have bottomless appetites! Our new leaders were made very welcome and brought fresh enthusiasm and talent to the team. It is particularly encouraging as we continue to welcome new leaders each year who have grown up through camps themselves and now returning as leaders. It really is a testament to the work and witness of camps and God's blessing on the work over so many years. We are thankful to God for our leaders' individual gifts. Thanks to the leaders for their hard work and for giving up their valuable time to serve at Inters.

We greatly appreciate all the prayers and support that our church family provides, both leading up to and during the week. God has blessed the work at Camp again this year and we pray that the lessons and truths learned would grow and flourish in the years to come. Please continue to speak with our campers in our churches, and encourage them in their spiritual growth. We look forward to another great camp next year.

SENIOR CAMP 2025

Senior Camp returned to the Faith Mission Centre, Portadown, from 7-11 July for a non-stop week of teaching, fellowship and activities...with probably a little less sleep than required! It was a year for the first timers: of our 28 campers, over half were attending for the first time; and as for our leadership team - well, almost all of us were brand new to EP Senior Camp too! What a joy it was to see how the campers, leaders, cooks and bus drivers got on together, with no one left out.

Rev Nathan Hawthorne (Ballyclare RPCI) led the morning meetings examining the feelings we often struggle with, including anxiety, guilt, and assurance. Our evening meetings were led by a variety of speakers on influences in our lives. All the teaching led to lively, in-depth discussions, during which our campers were willing to share their own experiences and encourage both one another and their leaders. It was a privilege to see the Holy Spirit at work in hearts leading to real spiritual growth. Times of corporate worship, prayer, and testimony-sharing were truly heart-warming.

The Faith Mission Centre has brilliant facilities, and combined with the glorious weather, we were able to make the most of activities on- and off-site. From Messy Games to minigolf, from The Lake (Kilrea)

to the sea (Murlough Beach), and from hunting dinosaurs and bushes in Armagh to roller-skating, competitive sports and an outdoor ceilidh, there were plenty of opportunities for hilarity and fun. God kept us safe and injury free, despite the mayhem and many miles driven, and it was great to see the campers enjoying themselves so thoroughly.

We're so grateful to the whole camp team, our cooks and bus drivers, and all our speakers and guests for helping make Senior Camp 2025 so memorable. We also want to thank everyone who so faithfully supported us in prayer; know that we saw those prayers answered every day in big and small ways. As we were reminded each day in our memory verse, God is gracious and merciful, abounding in steadfast love, and he is faithful in pouring out blessing as we serve him. To him be the glory! Our campers came with all their enthusiasm and joy, and a real desire to get stuck into the Word and the week, so it has been a pleasure to hear that they enjoyed it as much as we did!

SUNDAY SCHOOL PROJECT

Twenty-three children from the congregations of Ballyclare, Knock and Stranmillis entered into the Sunday School project this year; studying the life of John Bunyan or CT Studd. YC is thankful to our teachers throughout the denomination and for the willingness of parents in helping their children to complete it. YC is also grateful to Julia Grier for her diligent marking of the projects and her encouraging notes on each entry. Prize winners in the various categories are listed below:

Age 3-5

1st Bethan McCullough Knock
2nd Seth Roger Stranmillis
3rd Freya Dodds Knock

Age 6-8

1st Skylar McCartney Ballyclare
J2nd Matthew Brockbank Stranmillis
J2nd Ezra Roger Stranmillis
3rd Oliver Johnston Stranmillis

Age 9+

1st A.J. McCartney Ballyclare
2nd Meredith Roger Stranmillis
J3rd Sofia Elise Shannon Ballyclare
J3rd Nathan Brockbank Stranmillis

IGNITE

At Ignite we seek to bring together our teenage young people from across the denomination, to learn and grow in Christ and to encourage one another as we seek to follow Him. I'd like to thank all of our committee members for their hard work and dedication to Ignite, Jenny Watson (Knock), Laura Frost

(Stranmillis), Stephen Kelly (Stranmillis), Julia Killen (Stranmillis), Carolyn Houston (Ballyclare), Mark Ballantine (Groomsport). Laura Frost and Jenny Watson stepped down from the committee in September 2025 and we would like to pass on our thanks to each of them for their hard work and dedication to Ignite. We welcomed Julia Killen to the committee.

Ignite organised Senior camp reunion, we had an overnight stay in Crumlin EPC on Friday 7th March. We had an evening and morning meeting where David Bell and Christian Palmer spoke on Psalms 1 & 2. We enjoyed lots of games and fellowship and on Saturday we went to Airtastic in Newtownabbey. The reunion was well attended. We are thankful to Irene Scott and Jen Kelly for coming to cook for us, David and Christian for speaking and to the Crumlin congregation who very kindly let us use the church building for this event.

We had three 'normal' Ignite events before the summer.

1. 28th Feb we met at Stranmillis where Stephen Kelly spoke on 'What are you worth?' Genesis 1 v 26-32.
2. 6th April: We travelled to Crosscollyer for the Sunday Evening Worship Service and afterwards enjoyed a time of fellowship over supper.
3. 16th May we travelled to Groomsport, had a lovely evening at the beach followed by a BBQ cooked by Richard Beattie and Scott Goodrich and enjoyed hearing God's Word from Mark Johnston.

Our theme from September through to May 2026 is Prayer.

1. 17th October we met in Stranmillis where Gareth Burke spoke to us on 'What is Prayer? And Why pray?'
2. Sunday 16th November we once again attended the evening service at Finaghy and a short update on Ignite was given. We enjoyed supper together after the service, a lovely time of fellowship with the folk of Finaghy.
3. 5th December we had our Christmas Social in Crumlin. It was a great night of fun and fellowship. Ian Wright kindly returned to run a Traditional Scottish Ceilidh for us. We later sang some carols and Andy spoke to us on Anna's Prayer.

While looking at our theme of Prayer we have broken off into small groups to pray together and this has been a lovely time and very encouraging to hear many of our young people pray aloud to our Father in Heaven.

All of these events were very well attended by our young folk and a special thank you to all our speakers, youth leaders and to the congregations who very kindly hosted us.

OTHER COMMITTEE BUSINESS

As a committee we have been discussing camp financial arrangements and are working with Finance Committee to see these better streamlined and made more efficient.

We have seen a growing need for a Youth Coordinator/Administrator and are working with Presbytery to see a new post created and filled in the near future.

We are also working with the POCVA board to see safe-guarding training delivered to all of our people who work with children and vulnerable adults throughout the denomination.

We have planned training events for the denomination in 2026.

1. Saturday 28th March, with Jennifer Haaijer
Preparing and delivering a bible lesson to children and young people
2. Mondays 11th & 18th May, with Jordan McCullough
First Aid Training
3. Saturday 13th June, with Rebecca McMaster from Eden Consultancy
Working with children with neurodiversity (autism)
Each of the above events will be held in Knock EPC

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Pray for spiritual life and growth to be seen in all our children and young people throughout the denomination.
2. Pray for the work of camps, for some of our campers it is the main spiritual input in their young lives, pray that the Lord would help and encourage them even at home, and pray that key people in each congregation would be able to keep meaningful contact with them.
3. Pray for Ignite committee as it seeks to bring our young people from different congregations together for their spiritual good.
4. Pray that the Sunday School Project continues to be a blessing and a sign post to direct the hearts of our children towards ministry and mission.
5. Pray for Youth Committee as we seek out a helper for the administration and coordination of various needs in camps, POCVA and training.

INTER-CHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Rev. Andrew J. Lucas, Rev. Dr. Robert Beckett, Rev. Stephen Roger

Walk about Zion, and go round about her:
tell the towers thereof.
Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces;
that ye may tell it to the generation following.
For this God is our God for ever and ever:
he will be our guide even unto death.
Psalm 48:12-14

The work of Inter-Church relations has continued during 2025.

CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCHES IN THE NETHERLANDS

In January Rev. John Roger (Moderator) and Rev. Andrew J. Lucas attended the Synod of CRC in the Netherlands. At this Synod, the more liberal wing of the church tried to reopen the issue of women in office. We are grateful to God that this attempt was unsuccessful, and Synod reaffirmed its previous ruling that the offices are restricted to men. During the Synod Rev. Roger was given the opportunity to bring fraternal greetings and to encourage our brothers in the CRC to maintain a Biblical and confessional position. During the visit Rev. Roger and Rev. Lucas also preached on the Sabbath Day in congregations of the CRC.

EVANGELICAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND WALES

From the 28th February to the 1st March the EPCEW held its Biannual Meeting with Sister Churches, which Rev. Dr. Robert Beckett attended on behalf of Presbytery. He was able to bring fraternal greetings and to emphasize the strong and long established bonds that exist between our two denominations.

In May Rev. Matt Faux of the EPCEW attended our Presbytery Day Conference. In his address he outlined both the encouragements and the discouragements that they have experienced recently.

ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

The EPC has also enjoyed a long and warm relationship with the OPC, and in March Rev. Dr. Iain Wright attended our Presbytery. Rev. Dr. Wright read from 2 Chronicles 36:15-16 and highlighted God's persistent compassion. He brought fraternal greetings from the OPC and personal greetings from Rev Stephen Atkinson. Rev. Dr. Wright drew attention to the OPC's need for ministers and missionaries, and the growth that they have experienced in recent years.

FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND (CONTINUING), AND THE REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF IRELAND

Our relations with these denominations are longstanding and deep. In May the Moderator of the Free Church of Scotland, Rev. Callum Macleod, brought greetings to our Presbytery Day Conference. At the PDC the main speaker was Rev. Robert McCollum (Jnr) of the Reformed Presbyterians. Also in May our Moderator attended the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing), and then in June he attended the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterians. At both meetings the Moderator brought our fraternal greetings.

AFFINITY

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland were foundational members of the British Evangelical Council in 1952. Now known as Affinity, we remain active members, and during 2025 Rev. Dr. Robert Beckett attended Affinity's study conference in March, and represented the EPCI at Affinity's council meetings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That we give thanks for our sister-churches around the world and for the contact we have had with them during 2025.
2. That we pray particularly for our friends in the Christian Reformed Churches in the Netherlands that they continue to maintain a Biblical and Confessional position regarding women in office.
3. That we pray for all our sister-churches and for the increase of Christ's kingdom around the world.