Issue 93
Oct 2026

BALLYMENA FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

CORNERSTONE

Behold, I lay in Sion a Chief Corner Stone

Autumn Bible Conference 2026

IT is hard to believe that another Bible Conference is just a few days away. It seems like no time since our last Bible Conference with the Rev Higginson on Revival, and that was a Spring Conference!

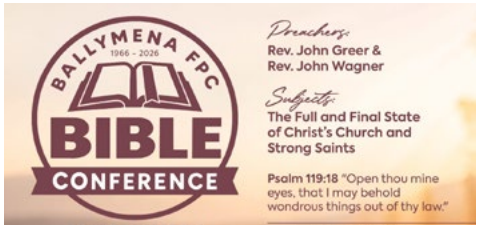
This year the preachers are no strangers to the congregation - Rev John Greer and Rev John Wagner. We look forward to their ministry among us and the Biblical exposition of the subjects which God has laid upon their hearts - The Full and Final State of Christ's Church and Strong Saints. Once again the Word of God will be central in our Bible Conference.

It is wonderful to think that even though millions of sermons have been preached, countless books have been written and multitudes of Bible Conferences have been held, the Word of God is the inexhaustible mine that keeps on giving spiritual treasures. There are always little pockets of gems and rich veins of choice gold and silver in God's Word that are yet to be unearthed by God's people and that is why we should always approach a Bible Conference with a spirit of expectancy.

We must pray for God's workmen as they mine and toil in the secret place of the study, that the Holy Spirit will illuminate precious truths to them in order that they might present them to us through the preaching of God's Word. It is my prayer that this Bible Conference will be a time of great spiritual profit to our congregation.

Rev. Andrew Stewart

In Proverbs 8:10-11 we read, **"Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold. For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it."** Christ is the Wisdom of God as we are told in 1 Corinthians 1:24, and I trust that we will hear much about Him in the days ahead.



New Sunday School Teachers

Rodney McCosh

THE month of September often symbolises new beginnings and recommencement.

This is also true in the House of the Lord as many works have started up again for a new season, with Sunday School being no exception as a new season has now commenced.

This year we have welcomed three new additions to the teaching staff of our Sunday School. They are Joanna Wylie, Catriona Flemming and Alan Hanna.

As a church family, please pray for these new teachers as they take up this important role. Continue to also remember all of our Sunday School teachers that they would know the Lord's help and blessing as they teach the Word of God to our children.

105th Birthday

MRS Mary (Minnie) Maternaghan celebrated her 105th birthday on 20th July!

Mrs Maternaghan, who was born on 20th July 1921, marked the special occasion with her family and a visit from our minster.

"O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together."

Psalm 34:3

Beach Day

Youth BBQ

Holiday Bible Club

Philip McClintock

ONCE again we are thankful to the Lord for His presence at our annual Holiday Bible Club.
This year our theme was 'Warriors of the Word' and each night we looked at different parts of the armour of God.

We were encouraged to see many new faces come along to the meetings and listen so well, especially when the Bible stories were being taught.

We finished on the Friday night with a parents and BBQ evening - it was a great answer to prayer to have so many join with us.

Please continue to pray for the work amongst the boys and girls and that we would see many children gathering in from the estates around us and souls being saved.

New Babies

Josie Evelyn Beth McKeown with big sister Lily. Josie was born on 7th August weighing 8lb. Congratulations to Jamie, Jerusha and Lily!

Ruby Kate was welcomed into the Bowden family on 21st August weighing 7lb 13oz. Congratulations to Matthew, Rachel, Harry and Beth!

Eliza Alice Warwick with big brother Jude! Eliza was born on 15th September weighing 8lb 13oz. Congratulations to David, Ashley and Jude!

Cornerstone Kids

Congratulations to the winners from the last edition who are :-

Timothy Trimble age 9
Heidi Brown age 8
Nathan Stewart age 6

Make sure to see Mrs Stewart to receive your prize!

A New Chapter

Philip & Jane Coulter

BACK in June, we were approached about the possibility of taking on the role of editor for the Cornerstone magazine. At first, the thought was exciting! It seemed like an opportunity to get involved in something new and to serve the Lord in a different way.
However, it wasn't long before the reality of what was involved began to sink in, and with that came a realisation of just how much work and responsibility the role would bring. However, after prayer and consideration that initial excitement has returned and we are looking forward to stepping into this work together. We know there will be much to learn along the way, and we trust that the Lord will help us as we seek to do this work faithfully.

We are very thankful for the work that Jenni and Alastair have done before us. From the very beginning, they steered the magazine and gave themselves to establishing it as a record of our church family.
Through their work, a valuable archive has been created, preserving memories and events about past and present members of our congregation, providing a record that we hope will continue to be a blessing for years to come.

As we now publish our first edition, we would greatly appreciate the prayers of the Lord's people. We are thankful that we do not undertake this work in our own strength, but we pray that the Lord will use this magazine for His own purposes—to encourage His people, to remind us of His faithfulness, and to share with one another the work He is doing amongst us.

"For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee."
Isaiah 41 v13

Youth Council Camp 2026

Leah Greer

Greenhill YMCA Centre, Newcastle | 3rd – 7th August

THIS summer I, along with others from the congregation, went along to the Youth Council Camp at the Greenhill YMCA Centre in Tollymore Forest Park.

One of the things I liked about camp was that no two days were the same, and there was always something different to look forward to each day.
The two main activities this year were a trip to Emerald Park and then camp water activities. We also had some free time every day, where we usually walked down into Newcastle town centre with our friends.

The evening meetings were a real highlight for everyone. Rev. Paul Thompson was our speaker, and he brought messages most evenings as well as a question-and-answer evening on the Wednesday which gave the young people the opportunity to ask questions about topics that had been on their minds. However, Thursday night was probably my favourite — we all gathered around the campfire, sang together and listened to some testimonies. I also really enjoyed our evening devotions, which we had in smaller groups as they were a lovely way to finish off each day.

For me, though, the best part of camp was the people. I made new friends during the week, and I also got to catch up with others I had met in previous years.
Thank you to all the leaders - I'm already looking forward to going back next year!

United Children's Camp 2026

Amy Greer

Moyallon Centre, Portadown | 3rd – 7th August

THE United Children's Camp was held at the Moyallon Centre, where everyone had a brilliant week. I attended along with three others from Ballymena and many more from other churches.

Our days started with breakfast followed by the morning meeting and devotions.
After dinner we had an evening meeting, then supper, then evening games, and then an evening devotion before we went to bed. I really learned a lot about the Lord during the whole week!

At the meetings we learned about a missionary called Mary Slessor who went all the way to Africa to tell people about the Lord. I liked hearing about all the brave things that she did, and I remember that she had red hair!

We had fun trips aswell - we went to the zoo and the swimming pool. We also went shopping and we played games in the field. One night we even had a movie night. I also made lots of new friends during the week, which was the best bit!

I want to say a big thank you to our camp leader, Rev McKee, and to all the leaders who looked after us so well. Thank you also to our own assistant minister, Mr Irwin, who helped too. Most of all, thank you to the Lord for such a safe and happy week.

Uganda Work Trip

Andrew & Zelda Gillespie

OUR recent trip to Uganda was a very special and rewarding experience, and we are thankful to the Lord for the opportunity to spend time with the missionaries and to play a small part in supporting the work at Emmanuel Christian School in the Kalunga region.

For me, this was my fourth visit to Uganda, and it was a real privilege to return and be involved in another work team. This time there were seven men in the team. Four were specifically involved in building a new play park for the children, while Kyle, Sam and I concentrated on electrical and maintenance work around the school and church buildings.

There was certainly plenty to keep us busy! As part of the project to replace the school's wood-burning stoves with gas, we installed new lighting and extractor fans in the kitchen. We also installed and wired twenty ceiling fans in the classrooms, which should make a real difference for the pupils and staff in the heat.

At the church, we upgraded the projector equipment and cabling, replaced a ceiling fan and carried out various maintenance jobs on the outside lighting. We also worked on the borehole and water pump controls, making some upgrades to improve the system, and had the opportunity to make some improvements to the school's Wi-Fi.

Although the practical work kept us busy during the week, the trip was about much more than getting jobs completed. Zelda was able to travel with us this time, which made the trip particularly special for us. She supported the team by helping prepare meals and assisting around the compound with whatever needed to be done. She also had the opportunity to visit local families living beside the compound, spending time with the children and babies. She enjoyed visiting some of the local towns with the ladies and experiencing a busy local market. For me, it was lovely to revisit familiar places, but this time to share them with Zelda and see her experience more of the culture and everyday life in Uganda.

We were also able to attend the local Sunday School and worship with the church family. Seeing the children singing and listening to God's Word in their own language was a real encouragement and a reminder that, behind all the practical work, the Gospel remains at the heart of the mission.

We returned home with many happy memories and a renewed appreciation for the privilege of being able to serve in this small way.
We would like to thank the Mission Board for the opportunity to go, and everyone who prayed for and supported the team. Please continue to pray for the missionaries, the work at Emmanuel Christian School and for the Gospel to continue to go forth in Uganda.

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."
1 Corinthians 15:58

July 2026		August 2026	
Average Weekly Offering	**£ 4387**	**Average Weekly Offering**	**£ 4,205**
Home & Foreign Missions	**£ 2108**	**Home & Foreign Missions**	**£ 1827**
Building Fund	**£ 522**	**Building Fund**	**£ 1519**
UK Fund	**£ 222**	**UK Fund**	**£ 242**
Uganda School	£ 200	Uganda School	£ 200
Kenya General	£ 200	Kenya General	£ 200
Liberia Radio	£ 200	Mr C. Killen	£ 200
Mr D. Warwick	£ 100	Liberia Radio	£ 200
Let the Bible Speak	£ 50	Paul & Cheryl McIntyre	£ 200
Libera General Support	£ 50	Mr D. Warwick	£ 200
Mr C. Maxwell	£ 50	Whitefield College of the Bible	£ 60
Rev A. Alvarez	£ 50	Missionary Council Boxes	£ 16
Rev D. McAuley	£ 50		
Total Missionary Income	£ 3960	Total Missionary Income	£ 3626

CALENDAR

- **Autumn Bible Conference**
  10th - 18th October
  Rev J. Greer and Rev J. Wagner
- **Tuesday 27th October**
  Deputation Meeting
  Emmanuel Christian School
- **Sunday 1st November**
  Anniversary Services
- **Tuesday 3rd November**
  Deputation Meeting
  TBS
- **Wed 11th - Sun 15th November**
  Youth Mini Mission
  Rev. Aaron Fitzsimons
- **Thursday 26th November**
  Church Anniversary Dinner