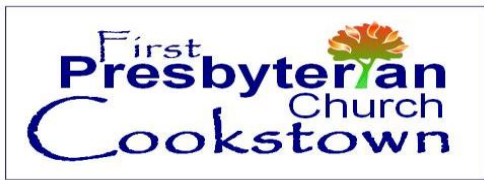


# **Congregational Mission Plan**



# MISSION - *Every Believer's Responsibility*

## Introduction

First Presbyterian Church Cookstown is committed to worshipping God, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with all and praising our Lord through our words and actions. We seek to stimulate, develop and deepen faith in Jesus Christ by addressing the various spiritual needs of members of the congregation. We adhere to the principle that God loves everyone and wants people from all groups to be reunited to Him. We are therefore committed to welcoming all who come to worship in the hope that they may experience true peace, joy and hope.

We believe that it is every Christian's responsibility to be involved in reaching out to those who are not followers of Jesus. It is our responsibility to show the love Jesus has for each of us to our families, friends and those we come into contact with each day. *"Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven"* (Matthew 5:16).

The motto of our Congregational Mission Plan is:

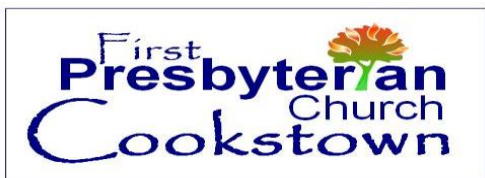
## ***Mission – Every Believer's Responsibility***

### What is a believer?

A believer is not just someone who believes in God, but someone who has made a personal commitment to Him and has a relationship with him. As Paul writes in his instructions to early church members: *"... if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord" and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved, for it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth you confess and are saved"* (Romans 10:9-10).

### Why every believer?

"Every believer" highlights the inclusive nature of a fellowship of believers, where there is a role for all individuals, but not with everyone doing the same thing (Romans 12:4-8). Within the mission plan there is a need for believers to pray for, encourage, and support the work just as much as the need for those to undertake up-front practical roles.



## MISSION - *Every Believer's Responsibility*

### Why is it our Responsibility?

Mission is the believer's responsibility because God commands it. Some of the first recorded words of Jesus' ministry were: *"Come follow me – and I will make you fishers of men"* (Mark 1:17). While his final words before he was taken up into heaven were: *"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth"* (Acts 1:8). Therefore for Spirit filled believers mission, or outreach, to the community (and further afield) is not optional.

### **Mission Plan Aim**

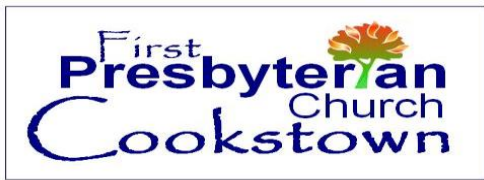
The aim of our congregation in developing a mission plan is essentially to build on its current ethos of being an outreaching church, with an emphasis on developing 'mission' at a community level. In our efforts to achieve a mission plan for our congregation and move from 'mission plan prepared' to 'mission plan implemented', the congregation needs the prayerful and practical support of its people to equip it for the ministry of reaching out to others.

Our aims are that:

- people both within the congregation and the community will realise their need of a personal salvation and, guided by the Holy Spirit, will come to a genuine commitment to Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord, and have a desire to live a life of obedience to and service for Him.
- for believers involvement in implementing this plan will result in them being spiritually challenged, empowered and renewed as they deepen their personal walk with God.

### **Objectives**

In order to address our aims, the following objectives were identified in line with the Presbytery of Tyrone's main mission objectives and priorities for the future:



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- To establish a prayerful attitude to the task of mission planning and the successful implementation of our congregational mission plan, being mindful to *“Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus”* (1 Thess. 5 v16 -18).
- To identify current mission practice strengths within First Presbyterian Church Cookstown and explore how these can be sustained and developed.
- To identify weaknesses in relation to mission within First Presbyterian Church Cookstown and rectify them.
- To explore ways to utilise members of the congregation in mission initiatives.
- To equip members of the congregation to effectively and confidently share their faith and God’s Word within the community, and be willing to step out in faith to attempt new things for God.

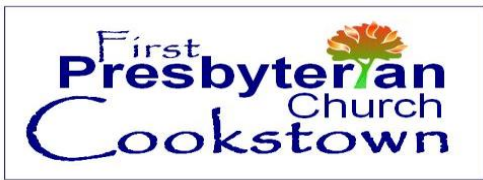
As we engage with individuals through the various aspects of the mission plan it will be expected that there will be different levels of spiritual awareness and experience. Therefore we need a plan which can relate to people in all situations and stages of their spiritual lives.

The plan should encourage the congregation to engage with and help people who need to:

- Consider spiritual issues in a new way (or, for them, for the first time).
- Be made aware of the gospel message.
- Understand the implications of personal salvation.
- Take the step of faith towards personal salvation.
- Be nurtured in the faith and encouraged to grow in Christ.

The plan should also be able to provide for believers the means of becoming:

- More enthusiastic in their faith.
- More encouraged to get involved in service and/or outreach.
- Better equipped and empowered for the practical tasks involved in mission.

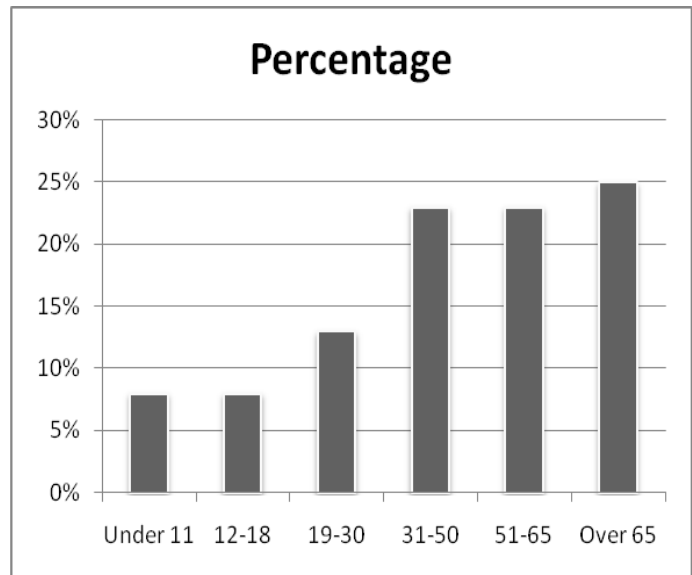


# MISSION - *Every Believer's Responsibility*

## Congregational situation

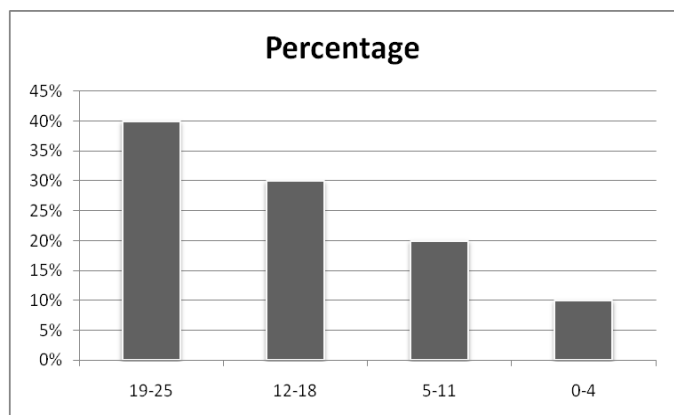
The approximate age profile of our congregation is:

Age	Percentage
Under 11	8%
12-18	8%
19-30	13%
31-50	23%
51-65	23%
Over 65	25%

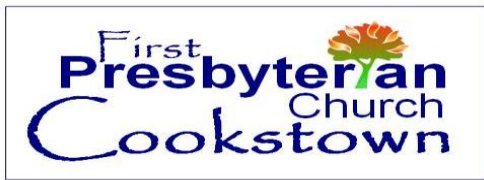


The number of young people in the church is reducing as follows:

Age	Percentage
19-25	40%
12-18	30%
5-11	20%
0-4	10%



These figures reflect the numbers linked to the church, not those attending church. The figures for those attending church would be more likely to reflect a greater proportion of older members. This may impact on the implementation of this plan.



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**In terms of mission, as a congregation we need to consider where we are at now, where we want to be and how we get there:**

### Where are we now?

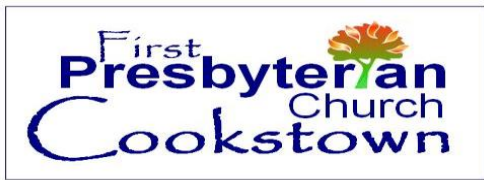
In our congregation mission, or outreach, mostly happens as a result of someone (or a group of people) in the congregation seeing a need, and then feeling led to do something about it. They then take the initiative, and the church supports them. For example, Jamaica First teams, Exodus teams, Summerlight. Others get involved with outside organisations, such as Leprosy Mission, PCI teams, OM, OMS, Ambassadors in Sport, etc.

### Where do we want to be?

- As well as individuals who have specific burdens, church led initiatives, particularly aimed at the local community, should be the norm in church life.
- Believers in the church should be challenged and encouraged to have a positive mindset with regard to their involvement in evangelism.
- Existing church groupings are encouraged to take a fresh approach to evangelism and outreach, and to annually evaluate their effectiveness in these areas.
- The church should help and prepare people to operate outside their comfort zones.

### How do we get there?

The mission plan is only a plan, therefore when implemented some changes may have to be made. Ideas may have to be given up and new initiatives introduced. What is important is that the church continues to strive towards the goal of seeing more and more lost souls saved and lives given over to Christ.



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The mission plan consists of four stages. These stages have been designed for some overlap. If conditions are right, the next stage should start before the preceding stage is complete. Successful projects should continue on after their stage has finished. The categorisation of the mission plan into the four stages is set out below. Full details of how these mission projects should to be implemented are contained in the action plans in Appendices 1-4.

### **Stage 1 - Foundation Building (Preparing and equipping the congregation for mission.)**

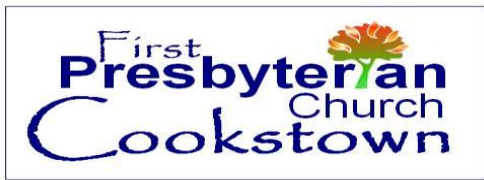
This stage is mainly aimed at Christians, but special services should still have an outreach focus to those who are not believers.

- Prayer for mission
- Encouraging existing organisations to focus on evangelism
- Educating members of the congregation how to witness, and encouraging them to do so in their daily lives
- Improving church stewarding
- Maximising the effective use of special services (e.g.- Easter, Harvest, Christmas, Children's Day) and using follow-up of such services.
- Children's work within the congregation.

### **Stages 2 – Priority projects (Projects for initial implementation.)**

This stage is concerned with outreach to those within the congregation who don't attend church, and also to non-believers in the local community.

- New message signs to be installed to use our excellent site for visual witness
- 'Friendship Room' to be used in friendship evangelism and mentoring
- Church library to be used in friendship evangelism and mentoring
- Youth Mission Weekend(s) - if YF has sufficient resources (This may be suitable as a joint project with other churches in the area)
- Door to door work with fringe members of the church
- Door to door work (including a church introductory card) with people with no connections to the church
- Children's outreach work



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### **Stages 3 – Intermediate projects (Medium term projects)**

This stage targets outreach to those within the congregation who do not attend church on a regular basis and also non-believers in the local community.

- Publications to spread our witness beyond those attending church
- Update the church internet site, with a focus on mission
- Special events on various themes held for evangelism (non-fundraising)
- Employ Community/Youth Worker to assist in evangelism both inside the congregation and to assist in church work in the wider community
- Hold a Gospel Mission

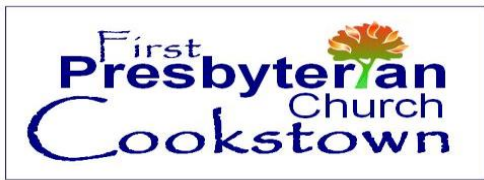
### **Stage 4 – Follow-on projects (Longer term projects building on the success of previous work)**

This stage targets outreach to non-believers in the local community.

- Service Evangelism (Community outreach through helping - gardening, household chores etc)
- Sport Evangelism
- Drive in church (This may be suitable as a joint project with another church in the area)
- 'Fit for life' health and beauty events
- Christianity Explored or Alpha Course (This may be suitable as a joint project with another church in the area)

It has not been possible to include all potential mission fields in the plan. Specific projects reaching out to some groups in the community are beyond the present capabilities of our existing congregation. The plan includes some ideas for mission which are not practical for the church to implement at this time, but which could possibly be of use in the future. These have been included in Appendix 5.





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### **Conclusion**

In implementing the mission plan it is important that all members of the congregation play their part. The plan cannot be implemented by a small number of overworked believers.

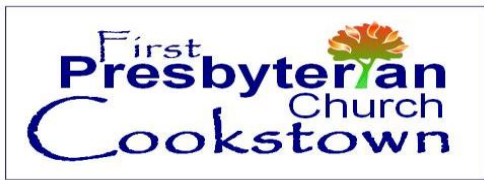
God has given each of us different gifts. It is important that the right people are doing the right work. Care must be taken to ensure that people are not expected to perform roles that they are not gifted for just because they appear to be available, are perceived to have the time for it, are easily pressured into it, or just because no-one else is available. If a work is God's will, He will provide the workers.

The mission plan is not intended to be:

- A recruitment drive for our church (although an increase in church membership may eventually occur).
- A community relations exercise by our church to make others aware of us, but rather an engagement with the community so that others will see Christ in us and their need for a Saviour.
- New initiatives introduced just to "freshen up" our ideas and get more people "involved in the church".

The mission plan is intended to be a programme of Spirit-led and Spirit-filled activities to challenge and uplift both those inside and outside the church, so that under God's instruction the believers in the church will become enthused, strengthened in their faith, united together and Spirit-filled, and that they will work towards the goal of seeing lost souls saved.

*"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).*



## MISSION - *Every Believer's Responsibility*

The following appendices are attached:

1. Action plan for Stage 1
2. Action plan for Stage 2
3. Action plan for Stage 3
4. Action plan for Stage 4
5. Ideas with potential for consideration for mission in the future