



**Image of the day**  
**Ballycastle by Frank McKelvey**

## People and places

### Protocol destabilising Northern Ireland society former First Minister tells C of I Gazette

#### **Arlene Foster hopes UK government deals with Brexit's NI Protocol 'before irreparable damage is done'**

"The experience of the Protocol has shown that it is certainly protecting the EU but at the price of destabilising society in Northern Ireland"

Former DUP leader Arlene Foster has said she hopes the UK government take action to deal with the damage which the Northern Ireland Protocol is doing to the UK's internal market "before irreparable damage is done".

Mrs Foster has also warned that any solutions on dealing with the past "must be victim led and not further concessions to those who caused such pain and grief for years in Northern Ireland".

She said these are the two "most contentious issues" for her successor as party leader post pandemic and post Brexit.

The former First Minister made her comments in an article in the September edition of the Church of Ireland Gazette.

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Mrs Foster stepped down as First Minister and DUP leader earlier this year following an internal party coup against her.

She is due to leave local politics completely and has said she wants to use her experience post-Stormont to tackle online abuse.

## **Episcopal Ordination of Father Ger Nash as new Bishop of Ferns**

**The Episcopal Ordination will take place in the Cathedral of Saint Aidan, Enniscorthy, Co Wexford, Diocese of Ferns on Sunday 5 September 2021, at 3.00pm.**

The Chief Ordaining Prelate will be Archbishop Dermot Farrell, Archbishop of Dublin, who will be assisted by Bishop Denis Brennan, Bishop of Ferns and by Bishop Fintan Monahan of Killaloe. His Excellency Archbishop Jude Thaddeus Okolo, Apostolic Nuncio to Ireland, will attend. The Apostolic Mandate from His Holiness, Pope Francis, will be read by Monsignor Joseph McGrath, the Vicar General of the Diocese of Ferns. The homily for the ceremony will be preached by Father Billy Swan, Administrator of Wexford Parish.

Clergy concelebrating the Mass will include: Archbishop Kieran O' Reilly SMA, Bishop Denis Nulty, Bishop Willie Walsh and Bishop Éamonn Walsh, priests of the Dioceses of Ferns and Killaloe.

The music for the ceremony will be led by Father Jim Fegan, Parish Priest of Ballindaggin and Father Tom Dalton,



## Greencastle, Co. Donegal

Parish Priest of Riverchapel will act as Master of Ceremonies.

In attendance will be family and friends of Bishop-elect Nash; priests and laity of the Dioceses of Ferns and Killaloe. Covid-19 restrictions mean that numbers are very limited, and it is hoped that the improving situation will afford the newly elected Bishop the opportunity to meet with priests religious and laity of the diocese, public and civil representatives, leaders and members of other faith groups, apostolic societies and pastoral groups in the coming weeks and months.

The ceremony can also be followed on the following websites:

[ <https://www.staidanscathedral.ie/our-parish/webcam/> ]

South East Radio.ie broadcasting on 95.6; 96.2 and 96.4 MHz with commentary by Father John Paul Sheridan



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[ [www.southeastradio.ie](http://www.southeastradio.ie) ]

## Crest of a wave family weekend in Portstewart



Connor Diocesan Youth Officer Christina Baillie and some of the leaders of the Agherton Parish 'Crest of a Wave' weekend ensure they are in the picture!

**Mental health was the focus of 'Crest of a Wave' – a big family weekend organised by Agherton Parish, Portstewart, from August 20-22.**

The weekend was funded by an Education Authority grant, with around 70 people taking part, made up of the parish Sunday Surfer families.

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The weekend included games, crafts, barbecues, a petting farm, singing, healthy snacks and family worship in the big marquee on the Sunday morning. Most events were held outdoors, with all participants contributing to the creation of a new 'wet felt' banner incorporating Agherton Parish's logo.

Rector, the Rev Malcolm Ferry, was supported in this initiative by Agherton's Parish Nurses. He said the whole weekend had been family orientated. "That was our desire – family should be the first port of call for a child who needs to say 'I am not happy.' Mental health was implicit and explicit throughout the weekend, with opportunities for children and parents to talk and share."

A great time was had by all. A gallery of photos may be viewed on the Connor Diocesan web site and there will be a feature on the event in the forthcoming issue of the diocesan magazine.

[[] <https://connor.anglican.org/2021/09/02/agherton-parish-on-the-crest-of-a-wave/> ]

## News briefs

### Cork welcome for Orthodox Syrian Church priest

On Sunday 29 August, Archdeacon Adrian Wilkinson met with the Revd Fr Mathew K Mathew at St Michael's Church in Blackrock. Fr Mathew is a priest of The Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Syrian Church and is the newly appointed vicar to their congregations in Waterford, Galway and Cork. He is based in Waterford and was meeting the congregation and presiding at his first service in the church that afternoon.

## **First Catholic primary school to gain integrated status**

The staff and children of Seaview Integrated Primary School, Glenarm returned today to what felt like a fresh start, and as the ribbon was cut and the doors opened, the first Catholic primary school in Northern Ireland to gain integrated status was ready to look forward to the future.

## **Dance World Cup medal winner**

Jasmine Gray, a parishioner of St Simon's and St Philip's in Donegall Road, Belfast, on her recent success in the prestigious Dance World Cup. Jasmine, who celebrated her 18th birthday this week, won both a silver medal and a bronze medal at the 2020/21 competition, held in Telford earlier this month. Jasmine has been dancing since the age of three. She attended Sullivan Upper Grammar School and is now studying a BTEC in Performing Arts at South Eastern Regional College. Dance is her passion, and Jasmine is skilled in every format – jazz, tap, modern, hip hop, street, ballet and more. She has also done acro-gymnastics, trampolining and cheerleading, and is hoping to continue her study of dance at Urdang, an independent performing arts academy in London.

## **Ordinations this Sunday**

The Ordination of Jonny Lowden as deacon will take place in St Michael's Parish Church, Belfast, in Connor Diocese, on Sunday September 5 at 3.30pm.

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An ordination of presbyters/priests will take place in Down Cathedral on Sunday 5 September at 4.00 pm.

The Bishop of Down and Dromore will ordain three presbyters:

Revd Rodney Blair for the curacy of Shankill, Lurgan; Revd Andrew Hay for the curacy of St Finnian's Cregagh, and Revd Anna Williams for the curacy of Seapatrck, Banbridge

The preacher will be Revd Mark Aldridge, an Assistant National Leader for New Wine and Director of Church Leadership Development.

## Quotes

When Dublin tried to hold modest commemoration for RIC it caused unholy ruckus and rocked all of ROI and showed forked tongue of SF as clear as day

There does seem to be undue emphasis on curtailing unionist symbols and history, meanwhile burnishing nationalist history and symbols.

[Brian John Spencer](#)

Simon Byrne must be the only Chief Constable in the Flag of United Kingdom who is ashamed and embarrassed to remember fallen police officers. Only yesterday, on a visit to the police station on the Lisburn Rd, I was appalled to learn that memorials had been removed from the reception area.

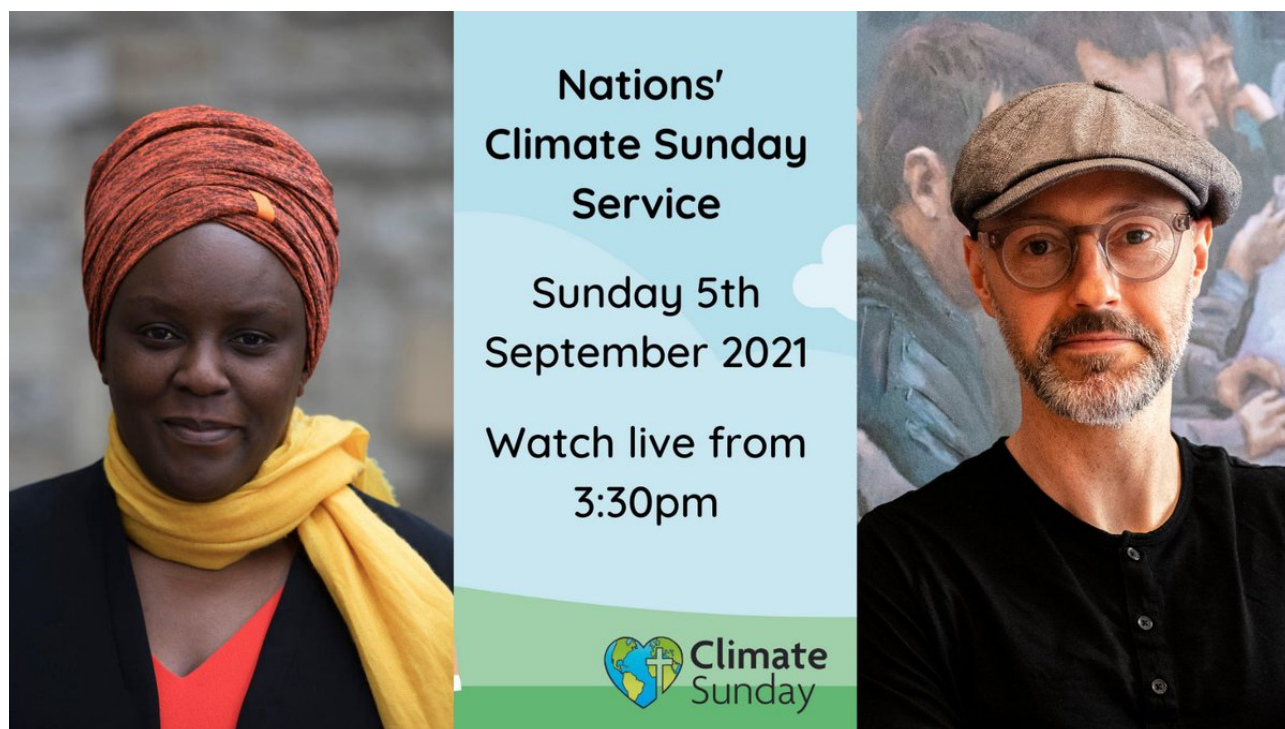
[Sammy Wilson MP](#)



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## Books, Broadcasts, Resources and Webinars

### Climate Sunday service - Churches Prepare for COP 26



**Join with Christians across Britain and Ireland to pray for the Glasgow climate talks and to present our climate pledges to the Government**

More than 1,600 churches across Britain and Ireland have registered their Climate Sunday services. It's an amazing testimony to churches' desire to show love for God and neighbour by caring for creation and acting on climate change.

On 5 September, we'll be coming together to pray and to present our pledges to Government. It will be a time to

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share in worship, celebrate what churches are doing, and commit ourselves to further action.

The service will be broadcast live from Glasgow Cathedral in partnership with Glasgow Churches Together - at the heart of the city where the UN climate talks will take place in November - with contributions from Christians around the nations.

Join us! We'll be sharing music and inspirational videos from 3:30, and the service itself will begin at 4:00. You, and your church, are warmly welcome.

Register now to be sent the full details for joining online - link below.

D Campbell art will be recreating a young climate activists' version of the iconic painting 'the Skating Minister' during the service.

Watch live at : <http://nationsclimatesunday.eventbrite.com>

## **BBC Radio Ulster Morning Service with Bishop Harold Miller**

This Sunday's Morning Service on BBC Radio Ulster will be led by the Rt Revd Harold Miller, former Bishop of Down and Dromore, and will focus on the theme of 'Poverty'. The programme will be broadcast at 10.15am and will be available afterwards on the web.

## Free 'Keeping In Touch' project packs

### Welcoming young people back to church

**The Keeping In Touch project, funded by CIYD and the Education Authority (Northern Ireland), is providing packs for parishes across the island to help them keep in touch with young people, encouraging connection and providing a way to invite them to in-person events.**

Every parish across the Church of Ireland has a fresh opportunity in September to welcome young people to be come and meet new friends through their ministries as the new school term begins.

The packs have been shaped to reflect the Anglican Communion's Five Marks of Mission, and each has been planned to be as sustainable and ethical as possible.

Christina Baillie, the Diocese of Connor's Youth Officer, remarks: "As restrictions ease, we have the opportunity to reconnect with young people. We believe this resource will support local leaders to rebuild those connections and remind young people that we are here for them. By reflecting the Five Marks of Mission, this provides a helpful starting point for young people and leaders in their conversations."

The resource includes:

- a postcard, made from seed paper, which can be personalised by local parish leaders;



- a wooden token with the word 'hope'; and
- the opportunity to donate a euro to a charity of their choice.

CIYD wanted to do this project with the Five Marks of Mission, which encourages us to consider our actions and how we live. Each Keeping In Touch pack connects with these five things: Tell, Teach, Tend, Treasure and Transform.

**Tell:** The Bible verse (Psalm 71:5) used on the postcards, which were made by a small Irish business, provides an opportunity for young people to be reminded of the life-giving news within the Bible. Alongside the postcard features a wooden token with the word 'hope'.

These have been made individually by The Yard social enterprise, part of the Solas Project, Dublin, and act as a reminder of calm and comfort for young people.

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**Teach:** The postcards are blank on the back and you are welcome to write a message to decorate the front of the postcard as you like. This invites the church community together to express their care and support for the young people.

**Tend:** Christians are encouraged to respond to the needs of the world. We have chosen three charities – Women’s Aid, Childline (through NSPCC and ISPCC), and the Society of St Vincent de Paul

– and young people can choose one that resonates with them and pledge a euro to that charity.

**Treasure:** Part of following God means enjoying the world and his creation. Each postcard is made from seed paper, meaning young people can plant it and wildflowers can grow.

**Transform:** By pledging a euro to charity, planting wildflowers or connecting with a local parish, we believe these packs can transform parishes and communities across Ireland.

Your parish is invited to request a pack for each young person by completing the form here:

<https://forms.gle/PngrGqmoa9NE8t1v7>

Diocesan representatives will then help to distribute the packs across Ireland. Just click on and download the flyer below to find out more and also check in on our social media channels. Feel free to share widely!



## Young Leaders in Ministry Fund open for applications

### **The Church of Ireland Youth Department's Young Leaders in Ministry Fund is again open for applications.**

The fund is open to young people aged between 15 and 25 years who can demonstrate a current involvement in the Church of Ireland. It seeks to support training and development courses, mission teams, leadership opportunities and placements that can be shown to:

- +significantly develop the faith of the young adult applicant;
- +grow the skills of the applicant especially in, but not confined to, leadership skills; and
- +be of significant use to the ministry of the Church of Ireland in the 12 months following the completion of the opportunity.

The next closing date is Monday, 27th September 2021, and application forms can be downloaded at the links below.

Encouraging applications, National Youth Officer Simon Henry says: "The impact of Covid-19 on young people has been significant in many ways and as a Church we need to be continually supporting our young people in not just nurturing and growing their faith but also with opportunities to grow new skills and qualifications that will be of benefit to the Church of Ireland.

"CIYD's Young Leaders in Ministry Fund aims to provide financial support to encourage more individuals from the



Church of Ireland to undertake existing opportunities, both within and beyond the Church. This fund exists to grow young leaders, and as we look to a post-pandemic future, I would encourage clergy and youth leaders alike to direct their young people aged 15–25 to apply to this fund – whether it is for a youth work qualification, internship opportunity, or perhaps more local mission over the summer period and beyond. The potential impact of this fund is huge and we have had a very encouraging response since the fund launched in 2019.”

Application form – PDF and...

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Application form – Word document

<https://www.ireland.anglican.org/news/10867/new-round-for-young-leaders>

Youth leaders are also reminded that the Keeping In Touch packs, which help to welcome young people back to in-person events,

are still available for parishes across the island of Ireland. Just click here to find out more and order your free pack.

Places are also still available on the Aurora training course for youth leaders in the Republic, which starts later this month and runs until next May.

## Church Army news update



Get your brand new edition of Catalyst here -

[[[ [https://www.churcharmy.org.uk/Groups/292401/Church\\_Army/web/Be\\_Inspired/Catalyst/Catalyst.aspx](https://www.churcharmy.org.uk/Groups/292401/Church_Army/web/Be_Inspired/Catalyst/Catalyst.aspx) ]

## Opinion

# Amnesty plan risks more harm than healing

## by David Smyth

**The British government's widely criticised proposals to end prosecutions relating to the Troubles are a blunt move lacking in process and substance, and highlight the pressing need for a mainstreaming of the Christian ministry of peacemaking**

THE British government's plan to introduce a statute of limitations to end all prosecutions related to the Troubles before 1998 is deeply concerning, falling short in both substance and process.

### Substance

The five political parties which make up the Northern Ireland Executive, as well as many victims and survivors of the Troubles, have condemned this approach, which would also end current and future civil cases and inquests.

Opposition comes from right across the political spectrum and from groups representing victims of both republican and loyalist paramilitaries, veterans and those killed by state forces.

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The shared concern is that such a blunt move fails to address the specific and systematic complexities and injustices of the Troubles.



The justice system, and confidence in it, works on the basis of just law, specific facts and evidence, and serving the public interest.

There is a danger that rather than 'drawing a line under the Troubles', as Boris Johnson perhaps genuinely or naively hopes this will do, it will only serve to further entrench the pains and injustices of the past.

## Process

The overwhelming feeling is that is it wrong - legally, politically, morally - for the British government, a signatory of the Good Friday Agreement and Stormont House Agreement, to attempt to act in this way.

Proposals to address some of the most urgent legacy impacts of the Troubles were agreed by executive parties and the British and Irish governments as part of the Stormont House Agreement in December 2014. While not all victims and survivors will have agreed with those proposals, representative groups were widely included and consulted at that time.



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There is no doubt that delays in implementation, in some part due to the collapse of the Northern Ireland Assembly and the pandemic, and in some part due to posturing and politicking, have added to the trauma, frustration and increasing urgency of the present situation.

The government's latest plan, however, does not appear to be an attempt to expedite matters for victims and survivors. It seeks to unilaterally override both the Stormont House Agreement and devolution.

As we in Evangelical Alliance - along with others - warned at the time when legislation on abortion was introduced, a worrying precedent has been set and pattern is now emerging around how the British government deals with politically sensitive matters in Northern Ireland.

## **Justice and truth**

We need an honest public conversation about justice, where realistic expectations and hopes can be discussed.

What is the relationship between truth and justice? How far can justice be achieved without truth? What is the role of the state in this and how can it be held to account appropriately alongside other groups in the conflict?

What does justice look like if someone is convicted of killing one person, five people or 15 people post-Good Friday Agreement? How retributive is this justice? How restorative?

From an evidential point of view, with every passing year and the loss of witnesses and memories, the likelihood of

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successful prosecutions diminishes, and not just for Troubles-related crimes.

Civil suits and public inquiries are expensive and do not lend themselves to most cases of death and injury caused during the Troubles. Even when 'successful', as in the case of the Ballymurphy families, apologies, truth and restitution are difficult to navigate.

That said, it is another thing entirely to prohibit the very consideration of the pursuit of justice through the criminal or civil courts even where there is a slim chance of success.

In my personal view, this move by the British government seems to risk more harm than healing. It is a reminder of how closely the past continues to stalk our society as a present reality both when it comes to public policy and personal experience.

While it is often impossible to 'draw a line under' the past, it is important to recognise a good and genuine desire, shared by many people living in Northern Ireland, to move beyond the Troubles as our defining story.

These are difficult and weighty things and go far beyond the role of government highlighting the pressing need for a mainstreaming of the Christian ministry of peacemaking in Northern Ireland.

Followers of Jesus in South Africa, Rwanda, Serbia and many other places have tried to walk these difficult spaces between our present earthly limitations around justice and

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the hope of redemption in the new heavens and the new earth.

I remember hearing an African pastor talk about how the cross of Jesus transforms and transcends these moments in a very real way.

In any conflict, 'victims' and 'perpetrators' are bound together in blood. Many victims will never receive justice in this life or hear the word 'sorry'. Many perpetrators will never receive a pardon in this life or hear the word 'forgiveness'.

In the cross, however, justice and mercy meet. The victim finds that Jesus' blood promises justice for the sins committed against them. The perpetrator finds that Jesus' blood offers redemption for the sins they have committed against God and others.

This is not an amnesty - victim and perpetrator are still bound by blood, but it is the blood of Christ which offers the promise of new identities and relationships in this life and the next.

It is this spiritual yet tangible change where I can see the most pressing role for the church in the days and years ahead - this connection of hope for the future and healing in the present.

The ability to enlarge the horizons of what is humanly possible in the space where politics and law can only ever take us so far towards reconciliation.

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Truth, justice, forgiveness, redemption - this is the language of the gospel. Good news proclaimed and demonstrated for our people in this place. Blessed are the feet of those who bring this good news; now may we go as those commissioned, treading carefully with wisdom and grace.

David Smyth is head of the Evangelical Alliance in Northern Ireland.

## Poem for today

### Summer Sun by Robert Louis Stevenson

Great is the sun, and wide he goes  
Through empty heaven with repose;  
And in the blue and glowing days  
More thick than rain he showers his rays.

Though closer still the blinds we pull  
To keep the shady parlour cool,  
Yet he will find a chink or two  
To slip his golden fingers through.

The dusty attic spider-clad  
He, through the keyhole, maketh glad;  
And through the broken edge of tiles  
Into the laddered hay-loft smiles.

Meantime his golden face around  
He bares to all the garden ground,  
And sheds a warm and glittering look  
Among the ivy's inmost nook.

Above the hills, along the blue,  
Round the bright air with footing true,  
To please the child, to paint the rose,  
The gardener of the World, he goes.

## Pointers for prayer

### Intercessions for week following Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity Year B – 5th September 2021

Heavenly Father Mindful of the words of the prophet Isaiah to be strong and fearless, we gather our thoughts and prayers with hope and humbly call on You to help us in our needs.

Give your wisdom and heavenly grace to all those who serve our parish/congregation and to all others who hold office in your church, that, by their service, faith may abound and your kingdom increase.

(Short Silence)

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Creator God we pray for our world leaders; for Heads of State in Europe, The Commonwealth and for the United Nations. We also pray for our community leaders and those in public office dealing with difficult situations, especially all that surrounds the ongoing Pandemic.

(Short Silence)



Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Creator God, we worship You as the one who has given us this life, and ask that You will help us to live it to the full. At home may we be the friends and neighbours that we really want to be. Help us to spread the warmth of Your love to everyone we meet.

(Short Silence)

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Loving God Isaiah also foretells the time when Jesus came to open the eyes of the blind and unstop deaf ears and cast out evil spirits. We especially pray for any we know who are blind or deaf and for the specialist care which they receive to help them live a normal life. Thank you too for Guide dogs for the Blind and for Hearing dogs for the Deaf and for those who train them to be so helpful.

(Short Silence)

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Merciful God we pray for all who are coming to the end of their journey here on earth and pray that they may come into your presence and kingdom. We pray for all those who have come before your face and now rejoice in the fullness of life eternal.

(add names of the recently departed or an Anniversary list)

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(Short Silence)

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Faithful God we thank you that your wisdom not only enlightens us but transforms us and guides us in our daily walk through life with you. Help us, as James advises, to always accompany our words of faith with deeds of action.

Merciful Father: accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen



## Speaking to the Soul

**Then Ezra praised the Lord, the great God, and all the people chanted, “Amen! Amen!” as they lifted their hands. Then they bowed down and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground.**

Nehemiah 8:6 NLT

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The rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem in just 52 days was an amazing achievement. But Nehemiah was quite clear that there was something that was even more important and that was to ensure that God was at the centre of the city's life. In this chapter, Ezra the priest addressed all the people and brought out the Book of the Law of Moses. This may refer to the whole of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible) or perhaps just the Book of Deuteronomy. What we know for certain is that Ezra read for six hours, from daybreak to noon! This was quite a marathon, but it is recorded that the "people listened attentively to the Book of the Law."

We read that Ezra stood above the people and as he opened the Book the people all stood up and praised God. What an amazing moment that must have been as the people lifted up their hands in worship and shouted, "Amen! Amen!" and then bowed down with their faces to the ground. It is, of course, possible for us to worship God by ourselves, but to do so in a huge assembly like that is such a great encouragement. It is a powerful expression of our unity and our shared dependence upon God. God's people have always needed to worship together and we need to treasure every opportunity we are given.

We have learnt a great deal during the pandemic about the importance of worshipping together. Who would ever have thought that the day might come when we would not be able to gather in our churches? And in those times when we were able to meet, that it would be illegal to sing songs of worship? But despite all the necessary restrictions, God's people have continued to worship him. What an amazing testimony it has been to our nation that, even though we

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have had times when we have not been able to worship together in one place, we have continued to worship God together online. You simply can't stop God's people from praising him!

## QUESTION

Why is worshipping God together important to you?

## PRAYER

Dear Father, thank you for the privilege of being able to worship you. Help me to treasure every opportunity of worshipping with my Christian brothers and sisters. Amen

