

THANKSGIVING THROUGH SERVICE

Spring 2026

A New Season of Hope in Prison Fellowship

Have you noticed the new shoots and flowers appearing, bulbs bursting into bloom as they welcome the arrival of spring? New life has begun. Winter has passed, and we look forward to the beauty unfolding around us.

Prison Fellowship is excited to enter a new season of ministry, with new opportunities for growth and impact. Alpha has commenced in Magilligan, alongside a new Friday evening meeting. Lifesplan groups in Maghaberry are full, and we are exploring how to make space for new participants. New family visits are being requested following Christmas Hope, building on friendships formed over recent months. We are also

receiving new requests to support men and women released from custody.

New life is much more than additional programmes or extra visits; it is about transformed lives brought about by the regeneration of the heart. Pray with us as we anticipate the new growth that only Christ can bring to those we have the privilege of serving.

Robin Scott
CEO Prison Fellowship Northern Ireland

Thanksgiving for Christmas Hope

This past December, **Christmas Hope** brought practical help and heartfelt encouragement to families affected by imprisonment through the delivery of more than **550 food hampers** and **over 500 toy parcels**. The scale of this outreach marks one of the most impactful distributions to date, made possible through the generosity of supporters, churches, and volunteers

Christmas can be an especially difficult time for families with a loved one in prison. Yet, Christmas Hope exists to step into that gap—offering both practical provision and a reminder that they are not forgotten.

The hampers provided essential food and household items, helping families enjoy a Christmas meal and easing financial stress. More than 500 children received toy parcels given on behalf of their imprisoned parent or loved one. For many boys and girls, it's a visible and personal reminder that they are loved and remembered even when their dad or mum cannot be there on Christmas morning.

'I just sat and cried when I got the hamper as it is the most useful stuff that I need and will use. It was nice to know that I was thought of.'

'The children loved the toys and kept reading the book of the Christmas story.'

'My wee girl was so happy to have a present under the tree from her dad.'

For prisoners themselves, the opportunity to provide support for their household is deeply meaningful. It helps restore a sense of responsibility, leading toward personal change and rehabilitation.

Volunteers and partner churches played a vital role in packing, organising, and distributing the gifts. They also strengthened community awareness of PFNI's ministry. Supporters should be encouraged that their contributions translated directly into tangible evidence of God's love. For this, we sincerely thank all of our supporters and volunteers for their part in Christmas Hope 2025.

We are thankful to God for being able to bring some hope and joy this Christmas and grateful to each of you who helped make this happen through your prayers, generosity, and service. From all of us at Prison Fellowship, thank you!

Claire Holmes



“Let us not grow weary of doing good”

Andrew Elder's journey has taken him from engineering at Queen's University to full-time Christian ministry. Today, he serves as pastor of Village Church South Belfast, just off the Ormeau Road, and as a Prison Fellowship Northern Ireland trustee.

It was through involvement in a church plant out of Glenabbey fifteen years ago that his path towards full-time ministry became clear. Taking what he describes as “the plunge,” he completed a Master's in Theology and stepped into church planting in South Belfast alongside his wife, Hayley.

Before entering full-time ministry, Andrew worked with the Simon Community, supporting 17 to 21-year-olds experiencing homelessness. That role exposed him to youth justice, restorative justice, and probation services. More importantly, it shaped his understanding of practical Christian service: sitting with someone, listening, and offering support.

“Visit those in prison... care for those in need,” he reflects. “These are things Christians are called to do.” Those formative experiences made the mission of Prison Fellowship Northern Ireland resonate deeply.

Andrew had long been aware of PFNI, but when the opportunity arose to serve as a trustee, he opened his Bible at Galatians 6:9: “Let us not grow weary of doing good.” The verse confirmed his decision. “Isn't that the message of Prison Fellowship?” he says. “If there's a chance for me to do some good within this community, I'd love to do that.”

As a PFNI trustee, he is mindful of the legal and governance responsibilities, but also sees the role as providing vision, care, and guidance to staff and volunteers. He has witnessed firsthand the



impact of PFNI's work—through Christmas appeals, Sycamore Tree courses, and everyday engagement with those often overlooked by society.

His vision for the future is to equip local churches to welcome those with complex backgrounds, ensuring they find both safety and belonging. His prayer is for wisdom and the Spirit's leading. Above all, his encouragement to the PFNI team is simple:

“Your efforts do not go unseen. They have eternal significance. Let us not grow weary of doing good.”

Watch the full video interview with Pastor Andrew on our website: pfni.org/interviews



From Fire and Rescue to Prison Ministry

My name is **Graham Dougan**. I am a Christian, a son, a husband, father, and grandfather. I have worked for most of my adult life as an operational firefighter for the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service until I retired in 2019.

God had been calling me into further study of His word and, by His grace, I had the opportunity to study at the Irish Baptist College, completing the Preparation for Ministry degree course in May 2023. I then took up my present post of Assistant Pastor at Armagh Baptist Church, yet felt God was leading me into another avenue of Christian service.

A friend signposted me towards Prison Fellowship where I contacted Alistair Donaldson for further information. PF staff and I discussed the role of a volunteer and whether I would be a good fit. The Lord was very definitely leading me.

My first day was on the 21st January 2026. I was asked to help with the Sycamore Tree Project at Hydebank, with Natalie and Joanne. I didn't know what to expect! Whilst security was tight and the prison staff professional, I was surprised at how welcoming everyone was, an indication perhaps of the esteem in which Prison

Fellowship is held. The young male prisoners were not what I expected either; polite and respectful, just young men like my own sons. It struck me that there but for the grace of God could be any one of us.

I work as part of a pastoral team, being responsible for our men's ministry 'Forged' which ties in well with the work of PF. Time management is a challenge, yet God has granted me some flexibility in my church ministry. It is my hope that I will be accepted by the prison staff and prisoners moving forward, and that good relationships will be built. It is also my prayer that opportunities to share the gospel might arise naturally, and that God would move to transform lives for Christ.

Graham Dougan



Cooking for Christ

My first experience of Prison Fellowship was during a meeting at my church when Leslie Addis, Natalie Bunting, and a member of the Bible study group came to tell us about PF's ministry.

Natalie mentioned needing volunteers to do some cooking on a monthly basis for the Wednesday Lifesplan group. I enjoy cooking, so I thought this was something I could be involved in. It is on a monthly basis, so would be manageable with my other commitments.

I have been very impressed by how organised the team at Prison Fellowship is. I have felt very supported from the start and everything has fallen into place smoothly.

A friend and I went along to help with the Christmas Hope project, making up and delivering hampers. Again, the organisation was exceptional, making it easy and very satisfying to be a part of. It was humbling and rewarding to see how much it meant to the recipients to receive the hampers.

Before Christmas, I attended the dinner at Fitzroy, which I was kindly invited to. It was lovely to meet people involved with Prison Fellowship and hear more about the work. I also very much enjoyed the music and food provided.

I have been to the prayer group and hope to continue to attend. This is very beneficial as you hear what is currently happening at Prison Fellowship and issues needing prayer are highlighted.

My hope for the future is that I can continue to provide food for the very valuable hospitality provided for the Bible study group and also to learn more about PF and have the opportunity to help in other areas of the work.

Katherine Price



Instilling Hope Belfast

'May the God of HOPE fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with HOPE by the power of the Holy Spirit' - Romans 15:13

We are so delighted to once again have our female aftercare group Instilling Hope meet at our PF home at No. 39. Personally, it has been really exciting to see this come to fruition. The volunteer team is incredible – a lovely mix of compassion, wisdom, and a massive heart for these women we have the privilege of journeying alongside.

Together, we are journeying through God's Word, looking at the ordinary things people held and how God used them in extraordinary ways. From Moses' staff to David's sling, the Bible reminds us that what matters is that we place it in the hands of the Lord, who can transform the smallest thing into a testimony of His power and love.



This is my second year with PF, but first year engaging with the girls. I didn't know what to expect, but to say I've been blessed would be an understatement. Seeing how God has impacted their lives on the outside of prison has been so encouraging. They ask for prayer, not just for themselves, but for family members too. We really have become a little spiritual family and it is beautiful to be part of.

Julieann

The women's input inspires me so much. Our prayer is that they would place their lives in the hands of the Lord.

Lynne



Picture a Tuesday morning in the cozy room at No. 39. Hugs are shared and I already feel very much at home, praising God for the blessing and privilege of being a volunteer alongside Lynne and these precious women. How good it is to make new friends, to look into God's Word, and then share in prayer together! I'm excited about what the Lord is already doing, and will continue to do, through Instilling Hope in the future.

Joy

Instilling Hope starts with tea, coffee, and all sorts of goodies and a good old chat. We've been introduced to new delicacies such as adding a little jam to your cheese and wheaten! Then we read and discuss a passage from God's Word, followed by a time of prayer with the ladies sharing their personal concerns and requests. One highlight was a quieter girl who played her favourite worship song for us. This led to everyone sharing their favourite song. Hallelujah!

Maggi



CONSIDERING BECOMING A VOLUNTEER?

Visit pfni.org/volunteer

Aftercare - Female

S. lost her dad recently. She is heartbroken. Pray that she will be open to support and make good choices in what are very difficult days.

Lynne and her faithful volunteers are keen to continue to develop the work with women released from prison. Pray they would hear His voice clearly on this.

V. is very much struggling with health issues. This is causing great fear and anxiety. Pray she would know God's strength and comfort and that she is loved.

Aftercare - Male

Pray for volunteers to help the Aftercare team in the evenings. We want to try and open the centre one night a week. We especially need someone with cooking skills to join us to help make dinner.

Please pray for the men in the choir as we celebrate Easter. Pray for Ali and Stephen as they help to share the Risen Christ with everyone we meet.

We need an active volunteer willing to get down to our level and help us work outside each week. Painting, cleaning, landscaping – no job too big or small.

Prisons - Male

Pray for L. who asked for a Bible and has started reading it. He took testimony booklets, tracts and a Bible study too.

Pray for H. who has had a tough life with a brain injury. He has a faith and always appreciates prayer in his cell.

Remember the prison staff who are believers that their testimony would impact all within the prison walls.

Volunteers and General

Please remember R. who is really struggling with guilt, but has been coming along to the Lifesplan group. Pray that the volunteers would offer the right word of encouragement.

Pray for the volunteers who have assisted with the latest Sycamore Tree course in Hydebank that God may bless their work with the young men.

As the staff take a well-earned rest over the Easter holidays, pray that God would revive and refresh their bodies, minds, and spirits.

Prisons - Female

Pray for M. who has not been in custody long and has recently suffered a bereavement. Pray for comfort and peace.

Pray for O. who has been struggling with her mental health. Pray for the staff and services she engages with, that they will be able to provide the help and care she needs.

Pray for M. who has been recalled to prison and has been struggling coming to terms with this. Pray she would engage with the support provided and the Lifesplan group.

Family Support

Thank God for the many conversations with those who got a hamper and toys through Christmas Hope. Pray that good relationships will continue to be built.

Pray for wisdom, strength and peace for R. and K. as they are very worried about family members recently released from prison and struggling with addiction.

Pray for C.'s family as they struggle to come to terms with him being in prison.

The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

Psalm 145:18

Prison Fellowship Northern Ireland Limited Registered Office:

39 University Street, Belfast BT7 1FY

Telephone: 028 9024 3691 Email: info@pfni.org www.pfni.org

 **PRISON
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Northern Ireland