

THANKSGIVING THROUGH SERVICE

Summer 2026

In All Things

Romans 8:28 says, "In all things God works for the good of those who love him." How often have we missed the first three words: in all things?

We often focus on the "good" while overlooking God's sovereignty in the not-so-good times. When tears fall in silence, when pain and disappointment drag down the heart, and when life feels impossible, these words become difficult to understand. Yet, when we look back, we can see the presence of God.

A lady I spoke with recently recounted her devastation when her son was imprisoned. "I never thought it would happen to us." Then she shared how speaking with a family friend led to a telephone call, which led to the offer of a visit to her son in prison, and support for herself as well.

It was a very painful time for her and the family. But in the midst of the storm, God had people ready to come alongside

them, offering comfort, practical help, and ongoing friendship when it was needed most.

PF believes there are no such things as coincidences—rather, there are God-incidents. We see Him joining the dots and bringing together the right people at just the right time: unplanned conversations in prison, a friend sharing a phone number, or an unexpected meeting. Even in the darkest times, God is at work, reminding His children that He remains in control.

For PF, that means being willing to step into the unknown with the confidence that we never go there alone. Thank you to everyone who has been willing to serve alongside us. You are the person God chose to place in the path of someone who never thought it could happen to them.

Robin Scott
CEO Prison Fellowship Northern Ireland

Sycamore Tree In-Person

I recently had the opportunity to help with a Sycamore Tree course in Hydebank with eight young offenders.

I love the opportunity the course creates—to sit around a table and have honest conversations about the impact of their crimes, remorse, and steps forward. With God's Word woven throughout, it also shows them that the Bible, and the story of Zacchaeus, still speaks into life today.

There was naturally some bravado and joking—but there was also vulnerability and a willingness to answer tough questions. It's one thing to hear about these young men, but sitting beside them and talking to the person behind the crime opens your eyes and moves you to pray.

It was encouraging to learn that two young men had been reading their Bibles and started attending the church service in Hydebank. When Joanne asked what stood out most about the course, one raised his hand and said, "The story of Zacchaeus." While Sycamore Tree isn't faith-promoting, it is faith-based. The discussion always comes back to Jesus.



One of the most powerful moments was hearing four young offenders read aloud letters to their victims. It was encouraging to see the others listen respectfully and clap afterwards.

Since then, Joanne has received approval for a Lifesplan group and two of the Sycamore Tree boys have signed up. It's exactly the kind of next step they need, with a safe space to talk openly and learn more about God's Word and their need of a Saviour.

Natalie

‘There is always hope’ - Interview with Ronnie Armour, CBE

Ronnie Armour, a trustee of Prison Fellowship Northern Ireland and former Director General of the Northern Ireland Prison Service, has seen prison life from many angles. Over decades of service, he has witnessed the challenges faced by people in custody, the dedication of prison staff, and the vital role played by chaplains, volunteers, and organisations like PFNI.

Prison can be a frightening and lonely place, especially for those entering custody for the first time. Ronnie has seen people arrive carrying addiction, poor mental health, broken relationships, and painful life experiences. Yet, he believes that even in difficult circumstances, there is a unique opportunity to reach people at the point of their need.

Hope at the Point of Need

Ronnie reminds us that rehabilitation is central to the work of the Prison Service, and it is also deeply connected to the Christian message. The gospel speaks of restoration, forgiveness, change, and new life. That is why the ministry of PF matters so much.

Through practical friendship, prayer, family care, and programmes such as Sycamore Tree, PFNI helps people know they are not forgotten. Ronnie has seen first-hand the difference it makes when someone in prison is encouraged and treated with dignity.

He speaks movingly about Christmas Hope, and how important it is for families to receive a parcel and know that someone cares when they have a loved one in prison. That simple act can speak deeply both to families and to the men and women in custody.



Pointing People to Jesus

For Ronnie, the heart of this work is the gospel. He says, “I absolutely believe that the gospel message changes lives. It changed mine, and I’ve seen it change many others.”

No person is beyond God’s love. No situation is beyond His grace. In prisons, families, and communities across Northern Ireland, PFNI continues to offer practical compassion and Godly love. There is always hope.

Watch the full video interview with Ronnie Armour on our website: pfni.org/interviews



God Connects the “Dots” of Our Lives!

As a PFNI Board Member for 7+ years, and having reached my 75th birthday this year, I’ve come to appreciate that growing old has its benefits and I don’t just mean the free bus pass! As I look back on my life experiences including working as a Probation Officer and a Pastor, I marvel at how God is a skilled artist who delights in “connecting the dots” in our lives.

As a child, I loved “Connect the Dots” pictures, wondering what picture it would reveal. Our life journeys are made up of a series of metaphorical dots; our circumstances, relationships, successes and failures. Some dots we might see as bad and others as good. Many seem random without any apparent purpose.

Yet, as time goes by, God will connect our dots to reveal an intricate, well-planned masterpiece. By the time He gets done with His handiwork, every dot is connected and nothing is wasted. He finds a use even for our most painful dots and greatest failures. Paul wrote that “all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28). The phrase ‘work together’ in Greek is *sunergon*, from which we get synergy, and that’s what happens when you put elements together to form something brand new.

Many things that make no sense when seen in isolation are, in fact, working together to produce something good. There’s a divine synergy even in life’s darkest moments that produces something positive. It couldn’t happen any other way. The divine Potter begins with the raw materials of life then shapes them into something beautiful. It is not by accident, but by a divine design and nothing is wasted in the process. That is how we must look at life.

God alone knows what’s best for us as He connects the dots in our lives. We do not know why bad things happen, but God has not forgotten us. None of the dots in our lives are too awful for God to forgive or to redeem for His glory.

Go ahead and give Him the dots—all of them—and you’ll be amazed by the beautiful tapestry He’ll produce.

Gordon Reynolds

God bless William Grills

I remember that morning clearly. I had been in HMP Maghaberry for less than a week and my heart, and soul were in torment. I had lost my family, my friends, and everything I held dear. Except for my belief in God.

As I sat on the edge of my bed with my head in my hands, I heard a gentle knock on the door. The heavy metal hinges swung open and in stepped a little old man with an armful of books and gospel tracts and a smile that lit up the cell.

“Hello there. My name’s William Grills and I’m from Prison Fellowship. Would you mind if I sat down for a chat?”

If ever there was a godly soul whose mission in life was to share the gospel in the most loving yet pragmatic way, it is William. He visited me many times over the years along with hundreds of other men. He didn’t care about their backgrounds or their crimes. He simply shared his love for his Saviour and offered any support that he could. That included leaving those gospel tracts and books, all wrapped up in a big rubber band.

William retired in May of this year after decades of faithful service. In recognition of this, the Prison Service put his name forward to attend the annual garden party on 20th May with the King and Queen in attendance! William wrote a touching letter in which he says:



“I would like to express my sincere thanks to you for your thoughtfulness in putting my name forward for recognition of 25 years visiting in Maghaberry Prison. My wife Sylvia and I both enjoyed a lovely day at the garden party in Hillsborough Castle... It was a memorable experience and an unexpected honour.

I miss visiting the prison, but pray that Prison Fellowship will continue to go from strength to strength. Again, many thanks, William.”

God bless you, William. You have touched countless lives over the years, including my own, and I am deeply thankful for your Christ-like compassion. Thank you.

Watch a video tribute to William by scanning the QR code



A revival within prisons!

Something deeply encouraging is happening inside Northern Ireland’s prisons. In a PFNI interview, Prison Worker **Dean Moore** shared how men in Maghaberry are showing a growing hunger for God’s Word, prayer, and Christian fellowship.

After ten years serving with Prison Fellowship, Dean describes recent times as unlike anything he has seen before. Lifespan groups and Bible studies are having to double up. New groups are being started in parts of the prison where they have never run before. Dean says, “There seems to be something going on big in Maghaberry at the minute.”

This is a wonderful reminder that God is at work in places many people never see.

Hearts Opening to the Word

Many of the men Dean meets arrive carrying regret, addiction, mistrust, and disappointment. Some have been hurt by people who claimed to represent Christianity. Others have tried to fill the emptiness in their lives through drink and drugs.

Yet now, men are coming to Bible studies, asking honest questions, staying behind for prayer, and opening Bibles for the first time. Some are discovering that God is not harsh or distant, but forgiving, merciful, and gracious.

Dean says the men are “very hungry and open to the Word.” That hunger is a precious thing. It is a sign of hope. It reminds us that no life is beyond the reach of God’s love.



Prayer Is Opening Doors

Dean is quick to say that the glory belongs to God. Again and again, he sees lives beginning to change through the power of Scripture, prayer, and faithful Christian presence. Men are experiencing conviction, freedom, and a desire to know more about Jesus.

He also reminds us that “prayer is our fuel”. Prayer opens doors, sustains the work, strengthens the team, and helps men in prison discover that God listens.

As PFNI supporters, we should be greatly encouraged. Behind prison walls, God is moving. Men are earnestly seeking and lives are being changed. And they are discovering answers to prayer for themselves!

Watch the video interview with Dean online: pfni.org/interviews



Volunteers and General

Praise God for volunteers who have faithfully committed to PF over many years. Without their commitment we would not be able to deliver our wide range of programmes.

Give thanks for the volunteers who have signed up to help us run our summer football programme in Hydebank. Give them wisdom, compassion, and courage as they build relationships and share testimonies of how God has worked in their own lives.

Pray for our Instilling Hope volunteers as they meet together to pray and plan for a new season of Instilling Hope Belfast. Ask God to guide their discussions and decisions and unite them in purpose and vision.

Prisons - Female

Pray for the individuals who have attended the Sycamore Tree programmes that finish this month. Pray that what they have learnt and shared would have significant impact on their lives moving forward.

Pray for L. who is due to be released and is nervous about what life looks like beyond custody. Pray specifically for her as she seeks to reestablish relationships with family members and others with whom she has had no contact with while in prison.

Give thanks for the female Lifesplan programme which will take a break at the end of June over the summer. We are thankful for the number of women who have faithfully attended throughout the year. Give thanks also for the volunteers who serve within the group.

Family Support

Pray for G. that she will once again have contact with her grandchildren.

Pray for those families who are worried about their loved one being released from prison with nowhere stable to go and the challenges this can bring.

Pray for families as the summer holidays begin and especially those who are on their own with children without much support.

And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

Luke 11:9

Aftercare - Female

Lynne and the female aftercare volunteers (Joy, Maggi and Jules) will meet during July to plan for Christianity Explored in September. Please pray for guidance and wisdom.

A. is working towards sibling contact and is delighted to have this opportunity. She has made such incredible life progress. Praise God for this and pray she stays strong and focussed.

K. suffers from mental health struggles. She needs suitable, supported accommodation. Please pray towards this and that she will continue to accept friendship and support.

Aftercare - Male

Give thanks for B. He is very creative and has gifted us some of his writing and paintings. We are so thankful for a life transformed by Christ. Pray for B. as he continues to adapt to life after prison.

July can be a difficult month for some of the men. Pray for a peaceful fortnight and help to put God first.

The Crew have several jobs on in the community. Give thanks for Randy, Brian and all the men who join us each week to help others. Pray for safety and for tools and equipment needed to get all the work done.

Prisons - Male

Pray for R. who has given his life to Christ while in Maghaberry and was baptised. He said this would not have happened if he had not been in prison. Pray for his wife who is suffering with bad health and this is making him feel guilty for getting himself arrested, that he can't properly support her.

Pray for J. who has been in prison for a long time and is due out in a few years. He grew up in a church but would like to connect with one now to have some positive people in his life.

Pray for men who responded in the May meetings in Magilligan. Pray they would sense the Lord working in their lives and gain a deeper understanding of their commitment.