

27 February 2026

Dear brothers and sisters in the Presbyterian family,

At the opening worship of the Special General Assembly (SGA) on Wednesday 18 February, I pointed those present to the message and meaning of Psalm 46. This is a psalm the people of God have often turned to in times of trouble and what I pointed out is that our Presbyterian Church in Ireland is caught in a storm and that storm continues. However, the great reassurance of Psalm 46, is that we are not forsaken for the Lord assures us that he is sovereign and comes to His people in their storms. Our response to this knowledge is to make Him our refuge and to be still and know that He is God.

Following the SGA, I wanted to write to inform you of the steps we have taken in light of the criminal investigation by the Police Service of Northern Ireland and the statutory inquiry set up by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland.

As noted at the Special Assembly, the PSNI has requested that I act as the main liaison person with the investigation team, assisted by the Deputy Clerk Rev Peter Gamble. As this is a role that no previous moderator has ever been asked to fulfil, the General Council has set up a special advisory task group to assist me in this work.

Updates were presented on the progress of expanding our new safeguarding department and the production of new policies and procedures. Further reports will be brought to June's General Assembly in relation to the work of the task groups, which have been set up to consider PCI's use of compromise agreements; issues of culture, governance and integrity; and an assessment of the need for a survivor redress scheme.

The two substantive issues discussed and agreed at the SGA concerned this year's annual meeting of the General Assembly in June and a new senior leadership structure. Firstly, it was agreed to extend the General Assembly from three days to four, to enable greater scrutiny, debate, worship and fellowship, with the General Assembly now planned to take place, DV, from 9 to 12 June.

The second substantive issue was a discussion on the proposed new structure for the senior leadership team in Assembly Buildings. Members of Assembly agreed to split the current role of the Clerk of the General Assembly and General Secretary, creating a new role for the Clerk of the General Assembly, with a new post being created - Director of Operations. These two posts, along with the Deputy Clerk, who also has a slightly revised role, will now form the senior leadership team.

Details of the discussions that took place and the decisions that were taken, can be found in *The Review*, which is available on the PCI website, or by following this link:

- [https://issuu.com/presbyterianireland/docs/the\\_special\\_assembly\\_review\\_2026](https://issuu.com/presbyterianireland/docs/the_special_assembly_review_2026).

You can also watch the worship service and the business sessions - these too can be found on the PCI website here:

- [www.presbyterianireland.org/specialga26](http://www.presbyterianireland.org/specialga26).

Please continue to pray for our denomination as we navigate these difficult times. Please pray for me, and others who are seeking to give leadership and direction, and for all our staff centrally who are working hard to make things better. Also, we should never forget that at the centre of this storm are those that we have let down, those who have been harmed, or put at risk of harm, by our failures. We continue to lament our failures towards them and their families.

As we go forward, let me close by concluding with the opening words of Psalm 46, which act as a constant reminder to us all to trust the Lord in this difficult time - "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble."

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Murray". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letter of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Rt Rev Dr Richard Murray  
Moderator of the General Assembly of the  
Presbyterian Church in Ireland