

# Free Presbyterian VISION

THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE FREE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ULSTER



Queen  
Elizabeth II

1926 - 2022

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“Historians considered Queen Elizabeth I's reign (1558-1603) to have been the most glorious in British history, terming it the 'Golden Age'. However, we have been privileged to have lived during an even greater one, that of Queen Elizabeth II (1952-2022).”

## A Word from the Moderator



This historic edition of the *Free Presbyterian Vision* magazine has been published as a commemorative issue to mark the death of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. As a church, we lament her passing.

We acknowledge the goodness of God toward her, in sparing her to reign over us for these past seventy years. We thank God for her unflinching dedication to her duties as Queen. We recognise the Lord's grace in assisting her to undertake those responsibilities. We bow to the Lord's wisdom in taking her from us at this time; 'The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD' (Job 1:21).

This publication will be of benefit to each one who reads it – both young and old. It will be a reminder of the past seven decades of our Queen's rule. To the young, it will act as a teaching aid, instructing them that, under God, our monarchy has been established to defend the Biblical Protestant faith that we hold dear. I, therefore, commend this copy to you.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the members of the Presbytery Publications Committee for their work in the production of this special *Free Presbyterian Vision* edition. ■

✍ Rev John Armstrong,  
*Moderator.*

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# Kings and Queens Before Christ's Throne

The nation is in mourning, the Queen no longer reigns,  
Seventy years of history have now come to an end.  
Her voice has fallen silent, her kingdom left behind,  
A legacy recorded in every heart and mind.

She vowed to serve her people, she promised to be true,  
And, by the grace of God, she saw that promise through.  
She reigned with grace and dignity, with honour and prestige,  
A life of duty humbly lived, and at God's call she leaves.

Like every mortal on this earth, she stands before her Lord,  
And by His perfect judgement receives a just reward.  
All kings and queens must bow before the throne of Christ the King,  
The saved will gladly lay aside their crowns and worship Him.

The heavenly King whose hands and feet were scarred on Calvary's cross,  
Inflicted in brutality, as He suffered for the lost,  
Still calls to all his enemies, estranged and scarred by sin,  
To now repent, call on His Name, placing trust in Him.

Christ makes anew, He dwells within, salvation by His grace!  
Strength for each day He gives His own, until it's face to face.  
Saints reign with Him in a kingdom which always shall endure,  
For like His Word, which never fades, forever it is sure.

The question must be asked today: Within your heart, who reigns?  
Does self and sin hold sway, while rejecting Christ the King?  
Or have you called upon His Name for pardon and true peace,  
Through cleansing in the blood of Him whose reign shall never cease? ■

✉ **Rev Ryan McKee,**  
*Magherafelt Free Presbyterian Church.*

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# A Nation in Mourning

**W**e are a people who thrive on sameness; we do not cope well with change. We like routine and familiarity - because it makes us feel safe and secure. Sameness is like an anchor that keeps us grounded and steady.

In losing our beloved monarch of over seventy years, Queen Elizabeth II, we all now stand in the midst of a huge sea of change. This lady epitomised constancy and steadiness from the minute she became Queen. On her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, then as Princess Elizabeth, she dedicated her life to the service of the Commonwealth by promising, 'I declare before you all that my whole life, whether it be long or short, shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great imperial family to which we all belong.' We now see how she fulfilled this promise right to the end of her extensive reign.

#### **MOURNING A LOSS**

Queen Elizabeth II was a part of all our lives, even if we were not always aware of this. Constant reminders of her were all around us: when we handled cash; when buying stamps; when posting cards; and for those of us who remember public telephone boxes, when making phone calls.

This has now all changed, and it will continue to change as we welcome in a new monarch, King Charles III. He and his family are grieving the loss of a beloved mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother. We, as a nation, mourn with them. When people mourn a loss, they want to be able to do something to express their grief and sadness. In seeking to express grief over her loss, we have seen many sign a book of condolence, place flowers at one of the Queen's royal residences, or make a donation to one of her charities or patronages. It has been a time of national mourning on a scale most of us have never seen before.

**We must turn  
our thoughts  
to the eternal  
constant whom  
the Queen  
herself often  
mentioned in  
her life: God,  
the heavenly  
Father, and His  
eternal Son,  
the Lord Jesus  
Christ.**

The Bible speaks a lot about mourning. Great leaders such as Joseph and Moses were mourned over many days after their deaths. God's Word also tells us that sin should be mourned over. In Joel 2:13, God called His people to 'rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God'. Christians must mourn over a nation which is far from God, and those who are not yet Christians must also mourn. Our sin separates us from God, and it must be repented of when turning in faith to Jesus Christ for salvation.

#### **ONE WHO NEVER CHANGES**

The demise of our faithful Queen on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2022 might make us, as a nation, feel fearful since that 'constant' is no more. However, we must turn our thoughts to the eternal constant whom the Queen herself often mentioned in her life: God, the heavenly Father, and His eternal Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. God wants us to know that He is always there, and,

through the blessings of creation, this truth is ever before us. Every time you hear a bird sing or see a pretty flower or hear the wind blowing, you can be sure that the Creator lives. You might not always take notice, you may not think about it, but it does not change the fact that He is always there. He also reminds us in His Word, the Bible, that He is constant. Things change in this world every day, hour, and minute, but He remains the same. Malachi 3:6 says, 'I am the LORD, I change not'. In times of mourning and loss, it is such a comfort to know that the Lord Jesus Christ is 'the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever' (Hebrews 13:8).

A favourite verse that Christians share with each other, and with those who have not yet accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour, is found in Matthew 11:28 which reads, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' The future is in the hands of the King of kings, the Saviour, and those who trust in Him have no need to be afraid. He will always be there for you in your times of need, giving grace and help for any situation. The wonderful thing about having faith in the living Saviour is that, not only will He be with you in life, but He will be there with you in death. He will hold you in His strong arms and carry you into the presence of His Father for all eternity. Have you trusted in this Saviour?

In the days, weeks, and months ahead it will be difficult and it will be challenging; but, as a nation, we can learn from the advice of Queen Elizabeth herself when she once said, 'Each day is a new beginning. I know that the only way to live my life is to try to do what is right, to take the long view, to give of my best in all that the day brings, and to put my trust in God.' ■

✉ **Rev Samuel Murray,**  
*Portavogie Free Presbyterian Church.*

# Her Glorious Reign

*‘Happy and glorious,  
long to reign over us,  
God save the Queen.’*

**H**ow many times have we sung and heard these words? Our national anthem, unlike that of most other countries, is in the form of a scriptural prayer for God’s blessing upon the monarch. While we have deep sadness at the passing of our beloved Queen Elizabeth II, we also have gladness that God in His providence granted Her Majesty such a glorious reign.

Historians considered Queen Elizabeth I’s reign (1558-1603) to have been the most glorious in British history, terming it the ‘Golden Age’. However, we have been privileged to have lived during an even greater one, that of Queen Elizabeth II (1952-2022).

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### LONGEVITY & IMMENSITY

She was on the throne for seventy years and seven months, the longest of any British monarch. During that period, there have been fifteen prime ministers, from Sir Winston Churchill to Liz Truss, and nearly 200 prime ministers in the Commonwealth. Her Majesty owes her long reign to the goodness, grace, and mercy of God. Her Majesty was not only the monarch of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Head of State of many countries, but also the Head of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth, a voluntary association of fifty-four independent countries, comprises 2.5 billion people – a third of the world’s population. It makes up a quarter of the world’s land mass.

### PROSPERITY & POPULARITY

Queen Elizabeth, upon the death of her father, King George VI, commenced her reign on 6<sup>th</sup> February 1952. At that time, her citizens were still experiencing post-war austerity. What dramatic changes there have been since! When you think of what it was like in 1952 and what it is like now, it is a different world altogether. The seven decades of her history-making reign bore witness to an age of unprecedented human advancement, medically, scientifically, economically, educationally and technologically. Very few monarchs have been so widely adored as Elizabeth II. Visiting over a hundred countries, travelling millions of miles, meeting countless people, opening hospitals, and greeting people who had experienced awful tragedies – the Queen inspired millions. The twentieth century saw monarchs across Europe deposed, exiled or executed. In contrast, under



her reign, Britain’s monarchy did not only survive, it increased in popularity. It is a measure of the Queen’s global significance that, as we grieve our great loss, the rest of the world grieves with us.

### UNITY & LIBERTY

She was the glue that held the United Kingdom together when there were concerted efforts to tear it apart. She was a unifying force. Advocates for a British republic and independence have frequently cited the Queen’s popularity as the reason the United Kingdom remains united under a monarchy.

Other monarchs have ruled over immense areas, had long and prosperous reigns, and kept their nations united; yet they ruled as dictators. During her Majesty’s reign, Christians and people of all faiths or none have enjoyed freedoms which citizens of many other countries can but envy. Even at this present time in various parts of the world, Christians are suffering for their faith from governmental oppression.

### A MORE GLORIOUS KINGDOM

How privileged we have been to live during such a glorious reign. But, as the Queen herself reminded us in her broadcasts, there is another more glorious kingdom in which monarchs can be but subjects - that kingdom over which the King of Glory reigns. It is an eternal kingdom, for He shall reign forever and ever, and ‘of his kingdom, there shall be no end’ (Luke 1:33).

As the Queen was reminded at her coronation, one can only ‘be made partaker of an eternal kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord.’ It

was also stated that citizenship of that kingdom is only obtained by the gift of the King of kings and received by ‘having a right faith in Him.’

The King of kings invites us, sinners, into His glorious kingdom. He loved us so much that He secured entrance for us by laying down His own life for us. He left the grandeur of Heaven to be born and laid in a manger in Bethlehem. Having led a sinless life, He went to die on a cross. There, He took on Himself the sin and rebellion of His subjects. The King died in our place so that we might know pardon for sins, become citizens of His eternal kingdom and share in the blessings of His glorious reign.

Just three months before the end of her glorious reign, her Majesty personally directed that a particular hymn be sung at her Platinum Jubilee service. In light of her death, it proved to be a poignant choice: ‘Glorious things of thee are spoken, Zion, city of our God!’

The last verse reads:

*Saviour, if of Zion’s city  
I through grace a member am,  
Let the world deride or pity,  
I will glory in Thy name:  
Fading are the world’s vain pleasures,  
All their boasted pomp and show;  
Solid joys and lasting treasure  
None but Zion’s children know.*

Make sure that you are a citizen of that glorious kingdom. ■

✉ **Rev Ron Johnstone** (retired),  
Grace Free Presbyterian Church.





# From Our Queen's Own Lips

**T**hroughout her illustrious reign, Queen Elizabeth II delivered sixty-eight Christmas broadcasts to the Commonwealth, all speeches that came from her own pen and contained many indicators of her own personal faith in Christ. Some have suggested that her statements became more explicit, even more evangelical, after the millennium. What is beyond doubt is that she has left on record her own views on several key Biblical topics.

## OUR FOUNDATION IS IN THE BIBLE

Over the course of those Christmas

– and other – speeches, the Queen described the Word of God in four major ways:

### 1. It is the truth:

‘Christ ... revealed to us the truth in His teachings’ (Christmas Message, 1981).

### 2. It is the bedrock of faith:

‘Jesus, a man whose teachings have been handed down from generation to generation, and have been the bedrock of my faith’ (Christmas Message, 2021).

### 3. It is our guide and source of hope:

‘Throughout my life, the message

and teachings of Christ have been my guide, and in them I find hope’ (August 2022).

‘Beliefs are of fundamental importance. For me, the teachings of Christ and my own personal accountability before God provide a framework in which I try to lead my life’ (Christmas Message, 2000).

### 4. It does not change and does not need correction:

‘To what greater inspiration and counsel can we turn than to the imperishable truth to be found in this



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treasure house, the Bible?’ (*The Faith of Queen Elizabeth*).

It must be remembered that Queen Elizabeth II had many advisors – the Privy Council, made up of senior politicians and The Common Council, comprised of senior Bishops in the Church of England, plus 650 politicians and 756 peers in the House of Lords. Despite this, she considered the Scriptures to be more vital and foundational than them all!

It is also comforting to note that, from the commencement to the conclusion

of her reign, her assessment of Holy Scripture remained constant. On the day of her coronation a Bible was presented to her and described as ‘the most valuable thing that this world affords’. In her final years, she echoed that high estimation when she described the Bible as a ‘treasure house.’

#### **OUR FORGIVENESS IS FOUND IN CHRIST ALONE**

It was our Queen’s persuasion that a Saviour, who can provide a free and full pardon, is of much greater value than a philosopher who can teach theories or a general who can secure victories. She emphasised a range of points about God’s forgiveness:

##### **1. God’s forgiveness is greatly needed by everyone:**

‘God sent into the world a unique person – neither a philosopher nor a general, important though they are, but a Saviour, with the power to forgive ... It is my prayer that on this Christmas day we might all find room in our lives for the message of the angels and for the love of God through Christ our Lord’ (Christmas Message, 2011).

##### **2. It is based upon the death and resurrection of Christ:**

The prayer in her coronation service was most explicit: ‘... most humbly beseeching Thee to grant, that by the merits and death of Thy Son Jesus Christ, and through faith in His blood, we and all Thy whole Church may obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of His passion.’

Elizabeth II herself later declared: ‘Jesus Christ was born two thousand years ago; this is the true Millennium anniversary. ... In His early thirties, He was arrested, tortured, and crucified with two criminals. His death might have been the end of the story, but then came the resurrection and with it the foundation of the Christian faith’ (Christmas message, 2000).

##### **3. It is immediate:**

Again in 2011, she quoted the last

verse of the beautiful carol, ‘O Little Town of Bethlehem’:

*O Holy Child of Bethlehem,  
Descend to us we pray;  
Cast out our sin, and enter in,  
Be born in us today.*

##### **4. Forgiveness prompts love:**

Having highlighted the searching question in the carol ‘In The Bleak Midwinter’ – ‘What can I give Him, poor as I am?’ - she concluded that the proper answer is in the carol itself: ‘Yet what can I give Him – give my heart’ (Christmas message, 2012).

#### **OUR FAITHFULNESS IS A RESPONSE TO GOD’S OWN FAITHFULNESS**

Central to her long years of service was the determination that as God has been faithful to her, she must continue to trust Him and reciprocate that faithfulness to Him and to others.

‘Pray for me,’ she pleaded in her first Christmas broadcast, ‘... that God may give me wisdom and strength to carry out the solemn promises I shall be making, and that I may faithfully serve Him and you, all the days of my life’ (Christmas message, 1952).

‘I have been – and remain – very grateful to you for your prayers and to God for His steadfast love. I have indeed seen His faithfulness’ (Foreword, *The Servant Queen and the King she serves*).

We may best express our gratitude to God for His faithfulness to Queen Elizabeth II throughout her reign by searching for Him in His own unchanging Word, seeking His salvation by turning from sin and to the only Saviour, Christ Jesus, and drawing our daily strength, as our Queen said she did, ‘from the message of hope in the Christian gospel’ (Christmas message, 2002). ■

✍ **Rev Ian Brown,**  
*Martyrs Memorial Free Presbyterian Church.*

# God Save The King



In a sparkling moment of rare clear-sightedness, the people shouted, ‘God save the King!’ To the new King Saul, the glory of wearing the crown flickered before the challenges he faced. The need to unite and comfort a divided people facing hardship was heavy on his mind. Enemies were near, and he had large shoes to fill. We, Britons, are so very blessed that our national anthem should be plucked right from the pages of Scripture. This simple four-word prayer was first spoken at the ascension of Israel’s first monarch (1Samuel 10:24). Saul seemed a perfect choice: respectful, steadfast, sensible, considerate; his family had dignity, and he himself stood head and shoulders above his peers.

## AN ENORMOUS OCCASION

Yet, Israel understood that more was needed to succeed as King. Uniting twelve tribes seemed improbable. Soon would come the evil and brutal King Nahash, whose trophies were the right eyes of his enemies. How could Saul ever equal the wise and godly Samuel who led for decades? And then there were the Philistines! Sensing the enormity of this, the people pleaded with heaven, ‘God save The King!’



We must lift up King Charles III daily before a higher throne, and, by God’s grace, His Majesty will be a David and not a Saul.

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On Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2022, while addressing the Ascension Council, and sensing the enormity of his own role, His Majesty King Charles III said, 'My mother's reign was unequalled in its duration, its dedication and its devotion... I am deeply aware of this great inheritance and of the duties and heavy responsibilities of sovereignty... In carrying out the heavy task that has been laid upon me, and to which I now dedicate what remains to me of my life, I pray for the guidance and help of Almighty God.' Responding, the gathered leaders echoed again that ancient prayer, 'God save the King!'

To hear our new Sovereign humbly invoke God's blessing was wonderful in this time of national sorrow. As with Saul, humanly speaking, all the desire of our nation is to our King. We wish him head and shoulders above us, uniting our Kingdom, providing calm and dignified leadership in uncertain times, and comfort to a people facing hardship.

#### **PRAYING FOR SPIRITUAL AND ETERNAL LIFE**

Literally, Israel's prayer reads, 'Let the King live.' The security apparatus surrounding Royal events nowadays shows that little has changed from Bible days. God's physical protection for our King is still paramount. Armies can surround, but unless God shields, watchmen wake but in vain.

Yet, those who know Scripture understand that to 'live' means more than length of days. Biblical 'life' includes the spiritual and eternal. If our high hopes for King Charles III are to be realised, he must rest in Christ alone for salvation, and walk with the living God every day of his reign. He must 'live' in the fulness of God. He must be face to face with God, so that he is guided by the divine eye which sees what he could never hope to. He must see the King of kings in the Scripture daily and be moulded into His image. He must know the filling of the Holy Ghost without which there can be no real strength of character. He must be what King Saul failed to be. When we sing our national anthem, this is really what we are asking for.

#### **THE KING ON THE CROSS**

But as we sing for King Charles III, and think about King Saul, there is another Royal announcement we must remember - another gathering of leaders who spoke of God saving a King. Matthew 27:41-43 records that the '...chief priests mocking *him*, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now...'

'He' was King Jesus; His throne a cruel cross; His royalty announced on a board fastened above his thorn-crowned head, 'THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS' (Matthew 27:37). A King who truly loved his subjects, He alone stood head and shoulders above all others in perfect holiness. If ever there was a King, it was He.

Yet, there could be no saving for this King, for He was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Rescue was impossible, for God the Father had covenanted that He must die in the sinner's place. He must bear the penalty and wrath due for our breaking of the ancient Laws of God. Should He escape Calvary, God's Word would be untrue, His honour shamed, His believing people lost forever to hell, and His whole creation itself would crumble. There was no saving for Christ the King, for without His death we could not sing, 'God Save The King.' Our anthem is not simply another patriotic song: it is a constant reminder that God saves from sin. Every time we sing it, we face a personal choice to accept or reject salvation through Christ.

Our leaders and we must be sincere and constant in pleading our great anthem-prayer. We must lift up King Charles III daily before a higher throne, and, by God's grace, His Majesty will be a David and not a Saul. ■

✉ **Rev Marcus Lecky,**  
*Cookstown Free Presbyterian Church.*



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1926 - 2022

‘Although we are capable of great acts of kindness,  
history teaches us that we sometimes need saving  
from ourselves – from our recklessness or our greed.  
God sent into the world a unique person – neither a  
philosopher nor a general, important though they are,  
but a Saviour, with the power to forgive.’

Queen Elizabeth II  
*(Christmas Message, 2011)*