

## Statement

**22 November 2018**

### **Bombardier Job Losses: East Belfast Presbytery urges positive leadership in light of employment challenges**

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland's Presbytery of East Belfast, has expressed its deep concern for all affected by the proposed reduction in the workforce at Bombardier Belfast. Its Business Committee has issued the following statement on behalf of the Presbytery:

“The Presbytery of East Belfast is aware that this announcement, that 490 jobs are to be lost at Bombardier Belfast, will create massive economic difficulties not only for those whose jobs will cease but also for the community and the economy of the city and especially the immediate area of East Belfast.

“Through our 23 local congregations, we will seek to offer prayerful and pastoral support to families and individuals who are impacted, directly or indirectly, by this announcement, and to the many other people who are facing anxiety and uncertainty regarding employment, pressure on businesses and retailers, and challenging times in the agricultural sector especially as the implications of Brexit remain unclear.

“The Presbytery also calls on all of its congregations to pray for individuals and families who are experiencing the stress and pressure of the present economic conditions.

As part of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, we recognise the challenges presented by a global economy, and add our voice in urging and encouraging all who have the influence, or means, to further intensify their efforts to seek the creation of new employment opportunities, support local enterprise, and bring inward investment to our area, our city and our country.

“We would also urge political leaders across the political spectrum, as a matter of urgency, to return to government through the Executive and the Northern Ireland Assembly. Representation can only take place when representatives are engaged fully in the due process of government. Presbytery encourages all elected representatives to fulfil the mandate they sought from the electorate and provide leadership, especially in the key areas of employment, education and health.

“The Presbytery of East Belfast prays that God will, bless and guide all who “seek the prosperity of the city” (Jeremiah 29:7).”

**Ends.**

Further information contact Rev. Albin Rankin, Clerk of East Belfast Presbytery on 07740 580 295.

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## **Notes to Editors**

### **1. Presbyteries**

The government of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland has a form known as Presbyterian polity, and is much like that of other Presbyterian churches around the world. Individual churches are represented at both a Presbytery level and General Assembly level.

The General Assembly is the supreme court and the governing body of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. There are 19 Presbyteries, which are local bodies across Ireland, that are made up of a minister and an elder from each congregation in a particular area.

### **2. East Belfast Presbytery**

The Presbytery of East Belfast contains 23 churches, which includes just over 14,000 members. Covering a swathe of the city east of the River Lagan to the Castlereagh Hills then out to Dundonald and on to Holywood, it doubles back down Belfast Lough and across to the Ravenhill Road.

### **3. Presbyterian Church in Ireland**

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland has just under 120,000 members belonging to 535 congregations across 19 presbyteries throughout Ireland. The Presbytery of Monaghan and the Presbytery of Dublin and Munster are located in the Republic of Ireland, while the Presbytery of Derry and Donegal is cross border with congregations located in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

The Presbyterian form of Christian faith is best described as 'Reformed' with its strong emphasis on the Sovereignty of God, the Kingship of Christ and the authority of the Bible. It is the largest Protestant denomination in Northern Ireland.

Irish Presbyterianism had its origins in Scottish migrations to Ulster in the early 17<sup>th</sup> Century. Ballycarry Presbyterian Church in County Antrim is the oldest congregation dating back to 1613. The newest, Donabate Presbyterian Church in County Dublin, opened its doors in 2010. In 1840 two Presbyterian Churches, the General Synod of Ulster and the Secession Synod formed the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, with Rev Dr Samuel Hanna elected as Moderator of the new church.