**REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF IRELAND**

**PUBLIC MORALS COMMITTEE**

**RESPONSE TO IRISH EIGHTH AMENDMENT REFERENDUM**

*My eyes shed streams of tears,*

*because people do not obey your law.*

**Psalm 119:136**

The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland deeply mourns the outcome of last week’s referendum in Ireland. We stated clearly during the campaign, and we state it again now: abortion is the unlawful taking of human life. That the nation of Ireland has not only sanctioned abortion, but that many citizens greeted the referendum result with outpourings of great joy, is a cause for sorrow and should be troubling to us all.

God’s Word makes very clear that when communities and nations disobey His Law with reckless disregard, they are already experiencing judgment: *And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness... full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness...* (Romans 1:28-29a). This is a fearful thing. God’s Word calls Ireland to mourn, to fear His judgment, and for individuals to examine themselves.

The message of Jesus Christ was one of repentance – to *turn away* from sin, and turn back to God. Forgiveness for sin is possible because of Christ’s sacrifice at the cross. In John 8, when Jesus boldly protected a woman caught in adultery from the threats of religious men, his final words to her were, *“Go, and sin no more”* (John 8:11). Jesus preached about God’s love for us – but as he did so, he called people to turn away from their sin.

As a church we urge the Irish Government to turn from the reckless path they are about to embark on, that of “abortion on demand”. We urge Ireland to repent.

We also call upon Christians up and down Ireland to consider how we can best express the love of Christ in practical ways to women who will be tempted to believe that an abortion is the only way out; to those who will be left with a legacy of guilt after an abortion; to those who will need love and compassion during an unplanned pregnancy or a diagnosis of a life-limiting condition. Mourning the result of the referendum and calling people to repent must be accompanied by genuine care and concern for all our neighbours.

Jesus has called his church to be light shining in a dark world. By God’s help, our light must shine all the brighter as the darkness grows stronger: *“You are the light of the world... let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."* (Matthew 5:14,16)

May God grant a spirit of repentance to Ireland, and a spirit of conviction and compassion to His Church.