

Finding Peace & Security Amidst the Second Wave

“Surely the righteous will never be shaken... They will have no fear of bad news; their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the Lord. Their hearts are secure; they will have no fear.” Psalm 112:6-8

Dear Friends,

The news will get you down if you watch or listen to too much of it. So again, I would urge you to ration how much of it you watch or listen to. There seems to be nothing but bad news, rapidly increasing cases of Covid-19, increased restrictions, an Executive seemingly unable to work together even in the midst of a crisis, Islamist terror attacks, the prospect of a no deal Brexit. Yet the Psalmist who lived in times as disordered and chaotic as our own says, “The righteous will never be shaken, they will have no fear of bad news.” Why is that? “Because their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the Lord. Their hearts are secure; they will have no fear.” How can we know this peace that the Psalmist speaks of, in our current context?

Mark chapter 4 recounts a night 2000 years ago when the disciples of Jesus found themselves deeply shaken; their hearts were filled with fear. They were taken by surprise by a sudden storm as they sought to cross the Sea of Galilee. They were experienced fishermen used to difficult sailing conditions and yet this night the ferocity of this storm saw them seemingly powerless to do anything and what no doubt had initially been a sense of foreboding and anxiety turned to outright fear and terror as they thought, “We are not going to get through this.”

Now they had Jesus in the boat with them so should not their hearts have been steadfast? Should they not have exercised trust? Jesus seemed to think they should already have understood enough about Him to show less fear and to exercise more faith. Hence His rebuke at the end of Mark’s account, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?” Their problem was they were only beginning to grasp who Jesus was. While they had seen Him heal sickness and drive out demons, they had no inkling that He could command the awesome power of nature. Yet in their terror and helplessness they

found they had nowhere else to turn. "Teacher don't you care if we drown?" Then Jesus got up and rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet be still." The wind died down and it was completely still.

Now you would have thought that the end of the storm would have caused their fear to subside as quickly as the wind and waves and yet their response to Jesus calming the storm is not inner peace; it is even greater fear as the implications of what they have just witnessed begins to register with them - "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him?" Who can exercise such control over creation itself except the creator Himself? Their understanding of who Jesus is, is increasing and they begin to grasp something of Jesus' divine nature.

I'm sure like me many of you feel a sense of foreboding and anxiety as we look around us at the present time. It's not the waves of the sea that are causing us foreboding and anxiety, it is a different kind of wave entirely - it is the much predicted second wave of the Covid-19 virus. But we do not want to allow our foreboding and anxiety to turn into the fear of the disciples and it shouldn't, because we are in much better position than they were. For we know who Jesus is - He is the Lord and King, He is the creator of all and all things are under His Lordship and He has triumphed even over the power of death. In addition, we know He has promised to always be with His people. We know He is able to say to the forces of chaos and disorder in our world, "Quiet, be still." And even if He chooses not to still the storm around us at the present time the assurance of His presence, His love and His grace can still give us peace. So we need to be confident in Jesus, that He is present with His people by the power of His Spirit. Then we can truly say with the Psalmist, "Surely the righteous will never be shaken... They will have no fear of bad news; their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the Lord. Their hearts are secure; they will have no fear."

Yours in His service,

Michael Davidson

SERVICES FOR NOVEMBER 2020

Studies in Amos – Dr Charlie Hadjiev

The Eldership – Rev Michael Davidson

1st November

10:30am - ***Hard to Believe***

Amos 3:1-4:3 - Charlie Hadjiev

8th November

Remembrance Sunday

10:30am - ***The Qualifications for the Eldership***

1 Timothy 3:1-7 & Titus 1:5-9 - Michael Davidson

15th November

10:30am - ***Hearing the Voice of God***

Amos 4:4-13 - Charlie Hadjiev

22nd November

10:30am - ***The Qualities of the Elder***

1 Peter 5:1-11 - Michael Davidson

29th November

Communion

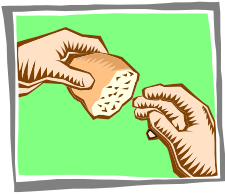
10:30am - ***True Worship***

Amos 5 – Charlie Hadjiev

**Do please remember if you are planning to attend to register by
Friday evening at attend.railwaystreet.org**

Watch online at www.railwaystreet.org

Telephone Line Service – 028 92448979



Communion on 29th November

Normally in Railway Street there is the opportunity for Communion once a month either at a morning or an evening service. It was the last Sunday evening in February when we were last able to celebrate the Lord's Supper together – that is now nearly 8 months ago.

Does it matter? Yes, we believe it does and here are some reasons:

- This is something that Jesus himself commanded his disciples to do.
- It seems clear in the New Testament that this was something the church did together frequently, possibly every time they met together.
- It is a visual aid that helps us look back and remember what Christ did for us on the cross.
- It is also something that is significant for us as disciples in the present - it is a means of grace. The Reformed church believes that Christ is present spiritually with his people and uses this sacrament to strengthen and deepen our faith.
- It is also something that causes us to look forward in the confident hope of Jesus' return to this earth to make all things new. As Paul said, "In this way you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."



So this should be something that we have missed doing together. The Kirk Session have discussed this and have decided that, as long as we are still able to meet together, we will seek to celebrate the Lord's Supper on **Sunday morning 29th November** as we would have been doing in normal circumstances.

This, like everything else, will have to be done differently. We cannot have elders distributing the bread and wine nor can we have people passing metal plates and trays to one another. So what we have done is to purchase a supply of individually sealed communion kits. These are around the same size and shape as our normal communion cups. There is an inner and an outer seal. Inside the inner seal there is a small amount of communion wine and then between the inner and outer seal there is a small piece of communion bread. We will place these in the communion cup holders 72 hours before the service on 29th November. This will then enable all those present to share in the Lord's Supper together. The minister will preside alone at the table.

We are conscious that there are many communicant members who cannot currently join us and while I believe that communion is something that should normally only happen when the church is met together physically, these are not normal circumstances, and so we will on this occasion also seek to enable those watching or listening at home to share in this communion service if you wish. **We would therefore ask that you let your district elder know by Monday 23rd November if you want to share in this way and we will see that one of these sealed cups is delivered to you before Sunday 29th November.**

Railway Street Home Groups

It is important that we make use of any means to encourage and support one another as a church family during these challenging times.

We want to encourage home groups where possible to meet together. Unfortunately, due to the most recent restrictions we cannot meet together physically but we can make use of apps such as Zoom to meet together online.

The Presbyterian Church has produced a recent resource called **'Prism'** specifically for Home Groups to use together to reflect on our recent experiences, to engage with God's Word and to pray for each other.

We would encourage you to make use of this resource which can be downloaded from the PCI Website free of charge:

<https://www.presbyterianireland.org/Resources/Prayer/Prism>

If you are not a member of a home group but would value this further opportunity to meet with others and enjoy fellowship with others in our church family then please contact Michael Davidson.

07787912072 mdavidson@presbyterianireland.org





The Election of New Elders

The Kirk Session has asked for and received from the Presbytery of Dromore permission to elect new elders in Railway Street. At present the Kirk Session is of the mind to ask the congregation to elect **six** new elders.

This is a very important occasion in the life of the congregation. It affords to those of you who are voting members the opportunity to seek God's will for the future spiritual leadership of our congregation. It also lays a spiritual responsibility upon your shoulders and so it should be approached with much thought and prayer.

Those eligible to vote in an election of elders must be both communicants and those who are recorded as having contributed to the Free Will Offering in the last year. The voters' list will be updated before the end of 2020. **If you are a communicant member and for some reason you have not contributed to the Freewill Offering so far this year, you should speak to our minister or the treasurer to rectify this as soon as possible to ensure that you are not disqualified from voting.**

In addition, if you are a member of another congregation who has joined Railway Street in more recent times you should ask your previous minister for a transfer certificate which should be sent to either Michael Davidson or Roger Thompson, so that you can be accepted into membership in Railway Street.

The Session hopes that all voting members will consider it their prayerful duty to exercise their privilege and responsibility in voting for suitable candidates for ordination to the office of ruling elder.

There will be a series of five messages on the eldership preached by Michael between the end of October and Christmas. It is hoped that the actual election process will take place early in the new year.

In the meantime I would urge all our members to do the following:

1. Pray for God's sovereign will to be done.
2. Ensure that you engage with all 5 messages on the Eldership. If for some reason you miss any then you catch up on the church website - www.railwaystreet.org.
3. Make sure you read the leaflet, '**Choosing New Elders**' produced by PCI. This will be available in the resources section of the website or you will receive a printed copy with next month's bulletin.
4. Begin noting down on a private list, people you believe fulfil the Biblical qualifications and qualities of an elder

The Code of the Presbyterian Church Paragraph 31 says:

“To be chosen for the office of the eldership in a congregation a person must be a voting member of that congregation and a regular attendant on its ordinances. He should be circumspect and exemplary in his conduct, both in the church and in the world, of acknowledged piety, endeavouring to maintain the worship of God in his family and held in esteem by the people.”

“Women shall be eligible for election on the same conditions as men.”

T.G. Campbell in, “The Work of the Eldership” says, **“The essential qualifications of the elder are that they love God's Son, God's Book, God's House, God's Day, and God's Footstool.”**

Prayer

Heavenly father, I ask for your help and guidance as I make my choice of those who are to be our Elders. May Your glory and the spread of Your Kingdom be my first concern. May those chosen, lead wisely, serve gladly, and witness always for You, by life and word. Give me grace so to work together with them that our congregation may be richly blessed and united in proclaiming Christ. For His name's sake, Amen.

RAILWAY STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

As stated by our Church Treasurer in the October Bulletin.

“OUR CHURCH IS VERY THANKFUL FOR YOUR CONTINUED FINANCIAL RESPONSE DURING THIS PANDEMIC OF COVID 19”.



DETAILS OF HOW YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE CHURCH FUNDS

YOU CAN SET UP DIRECT DEBITS THROUGH YOUR BANK

RAILWAY STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - DANKSE BANK DETAILS.

- ❖ FWO Church No 1 A/c - 95 03 61 - 91026178
- ❖ UNITED APPEAL Church No 1 A/c – 95 03 61 - 91026178
- ❖ PROPERTY/LINK Fund Church No 6 A/c – 95 03 61 - 61042858
- ❖ Envelopes can be placed on Collection plates in Vestibule each Sunday when you meet for worship.
- ❖ *Contributions can be left with or posted to :*

Church Treasurer :

Mr Stephen R. Johnston, 11 Portulla Drive, Lisburn BT28 3JS.

FWO /Gift Aid Secretary:

Miss Edith V. McConnell, 24 Warren Park, Lisburn, BT28 1LW.

*May we remind you that to be included in 2020 Annual Financial Report, **ALL CONTRIBUTIONS to all the church funds for 2020 must be forwarded to the church by:***

SUNDAY 3rd January 2021 at the latest.

Thank You
FOR
GIVING
...
GENEROUSLY

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DEATHS

It is with sadness we record the deaths of:

Mr Norman Samuel Johnston on 27th September

Mr William Robert (Bert) Cooper on 1st October

Mr Thomas Foreman on 18th October

Mr Eric Riorden on 21st October.

We extend our sympathy and prayers to all the families.

Please note that Rev Davidson will be off duty from

Monday 26th October and will be back on duty from Monday 2nd November.

*If you need the services of a minister during that time then
please contact Heidi England, Roger Thompson or Jean Murray*



REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY: a retiring offering for the Earl Haig fund will be taken on **Sunday 8th November**. If you wish to have your donation enhanced by Gift Aid please use the envelopes provided and enter your name and address or FWO number and your donation will be recorded.



PRAYER FOCUS

Luke 11:1 “Lord, teach us to pray.”

“Wash your hands, wear a mask, keep two metres apart.” In recent months we have been encouraged to follow these simple instructions.

The Bible gives an additional instruction and encourages us to pray. We have an opportunity to come together once a month to do just that. Please join the Prayer Focus group on **Monday 16th November from 8.00-9.00pm** and engage in silent or audible prayer. All age groups have a part to play and will be made most welcome. Let's seek God's will and pray our way out of this terrible pandemic. To Him be the glory.

We will meet through zoom. Details of how to join will be made available in due course.



We are sorry, that as a result of PCI recommendations, we had to cancel our meeting on the 22nd October. The committee are going to send all members a copy of the material that has been prepared for this meeting. It is difficult to be specific about the exact date of our next meeting but it will be announced in church beforehand. Please be assured of our prayers at this difficult time.

CHRISTMAS GIFT SERVICE – SUNDAY 6th DECEMBER

As in past years our Christmas celebrations will commence with this special Family Service. Once again we will be collecting gifts which will be distributed by the Belfast City Mission to young children and teenagers who are in need.

However, for this year, due to the pandemic, **there is a very important difference in what we are asking for – WE WILL NOT BE COLLECTING TOYS OR GAMES.** Instead we are seeking **selection boxes, packets of sweets, gift vouchers from toy shops, book tokens and monetary donations.** If you would like to contribute any of these items to this worthy cause then please bring them to this service.

Please also note that this year it will not be permissible for the children to bring their gifts forward during the service to place them at the Christmas tree. Instead, on arrival at the church, the gifts are to be put into one of the large boxes; these will be located in the vestibule and inside the back door of the church.

MODERATOR'S CHRISTMAS APPEAL

It is the normal practise for PCI to circulate information about the World Development Appeal in December, however, due to many circumstances, it has been decided that the Moderator will use the Christmas period to make a general appeal for our Global Church. We will advise the congregation early December of the details and the opportunity to contribute to this appeal

BIBLE READING NOTES 2021

It is important at this time to keep connected to God and a really good way of doing this is by using Scripture Union Quarterly Reading Notes. A variety of notes are available including:

DAILY BREAD - daily Bible Reading guide that aims to help you hear from God as you read the Bible. If you've ever asked the question, 'What possible relevance can this have for me today?' Or 'What difference does this make to my life.' Then read on...

ENCOUNTER WITH GOD - daily Bible Reading guide designed to look deeper at Bible passages to help you understand what God is saying to you and to his world today. Feature articles are also included.

Price: £18 (cash/cheque made payable to Faith Mission Bookshops), this is a special Church rate. If you wish to renew, cancel or start taking Bible Notes please let Ruth know.

To order, please place an envelope marked for the attention of RUTH NELSON on the offering plate at Church or post in the church office mailbox in the car park, indicating your choice of Bible Notes along with your Name, Address, Tel No and money by Sunday 15th November 2020.

For further information contact Ruth on 07940 814252

CAR PARK RENEWAL FOR 2021

Due to the current Covid situation, renewals for December are being sent out with FWO packs, as you will be unable to collect from the Church office. The documents being sent out will have the renewal form and on the reverse side are the costs and instructions of how to pay and return the form. The attached sheet gives the car park rules. If fees are not paid by 31st January 2021 fobs will be revoked. Thank you for your co-operation during this trying time.

Ian Barron Car Park Co-ordinator.

PRESBYTERIAN HERALD

The Herald team have sent a letter stating they are now back in the office, on a part-time basis only. There will be no further Heralds produced until the beginning of 2021 at the earliest and they thank everyone for their understanding.



Connecting With Culture

The Second Wave Breaks

As the days get darker and shorter, people are finding the prospect of more restrictions for months to come even harder than when we first went into lockdown.

In the first pandemic wave many experienced loss in all sorts of ways. Now, after an emotionally draining six months, the second wave is here. Apart from the medical impact, we have more job losses, more uncertainty, a very real lack of fun, and the disappointing reality that this is going to go on for a long time. We are running out of steam. As Psalm 42 says, 'all your waves and breakers have swept over me'. We need hope.

There is a strong parallel in all this with the ancient book of Job and his experience of loss and pain. Like Job we are discovering that we are not always entitled to health, wealth, and happiness; and like Job our suffering inexplicably goes on and on. Like the irritating moralising of Job's comforters, the constant critique of the media only seems to make things worse. And, like Job, our minds are incapable of totally grasping the meaning of all this suffering. We need hope.

Job was deprived of everything, yet even in his despair he never lost his belief that God was there. Occasionally an indestructible hope burst forth like a ray of light in the darkness of his pain. 'I know that my redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand on the earth. And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God' (Job 19:26). But the truly transformative moment for Job came when, instead of seeing his situation in front of God, he finally saw God in front of his situation. Then, even in the intensity of his suffering, the greatness of the Almighty eclipsed the problem. That is the revelation we need.

In this sad and weary time lament is therapeutic, and we can be completely real with our Father in Heaven. Yet in our lament, the path to rekindling true hope lies in the possibility of focusing on the character and immensity of God. Greater is he that is in us than the pandemic that is in the world. Join in with the ancient words of Psalm 42: 'Why are you downcast O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Saviour and my God.'

Paul Valler
Chair of the LICC Board

The London Institute for Contemporary Christianity is committed to:

- Empowering Christians to make a difference for Christ in our Monday to Saturday lives
- Helping church leaders equip their church communities to do it, and
- Fuelling a movement to reach and renew our nation

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