

www.railwaystreet.org

June 2021

The Link Redevelopment



Unless the Lord builds the house, it's builders labour in vain...

Psalm 127 vI

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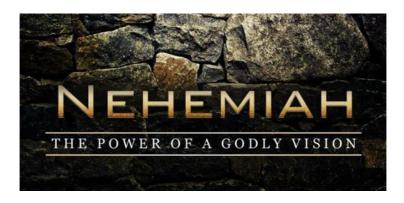
Church Office

Hours: 9.30am - 12.30pm

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FOLLOWING CHRIST SERVING THE COMMUNITY



"Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace." 18 I also told them about the gracious hand of my God on me and what the king had said to me. They replied, "Let us start rebuilding." So they began this good work." (Nehemiah 2:17-18)

I have no doubt that the revelation of how much 'The Link' Redevelopment will cost us as a congregation has come as a shock to everyone. Last Sunday despite the fact that the congregation was socially distanced and wearing masks I was still sure I heard a sharp intake of breath when the cost was announced. The facts and figures you can read about in the leaflet accompanying this bulletin. My calling as your Teaching Elder is to seek to bring us encouragement from God's Word as we face this challenge together.

But before I do that, let me say that I believe that our Congregational Committee were correct when they agreed that there is no benefit to be gained by further delay and took the brave decision to move forward. Without a doubt it is big step of faith. But I know that members of Kirk Session and Congregational Committee believe passionately, as I do, in the vision behind 'The Link' Redevelopment and the superb facilities it will provide us with when construction is completed. I believe that it will become the central hub in regards to the activity of our congregation from week to week and that it will truly become not only a physical link between our Meeting House and the Minor Hall but also a link between our church and the community we want to serve.

The temptation is to focus on the size of the task and to become discouraged and so I believe what we need to do is to look to our God and His Word and through that find ourselves encouraged and motivated to press on. Once again, I take encouragement from the Old Testament book of Nehemiah. This is one of only two Bible books that I have preached through in all three locations where I have served as a teaching elder - first of all back in 1st Antrim, then in Drumgooland & Kilkinamurry and most recently in Railway Street on Sunday evenings during my first year.

In this book we find Nehemiah and the retuned Jewish exiles facing the mammoth task of rebuilding the shattered and broken walls of Jerusalem. Yet what is clear from the opening verses right through to the end is that Nehemiah's vision for Jerusalem was God given, and it was covered with careful planning, hard work and constant prayer. I would strongly recommend that you take some time to read it afresh yourself as we set out to make our vision a reality.

I believe that where there is a God given vision and it is shared with God's people the Holy Spirit sees to it that God's people catch that vision and that is what we see in Nehemiah chapter 2. After having arrived in the city of Jerusalem for the first time and seeing first-hand the scale of the task, he then shared his vision with the people. We read that he told them, "about the gracious hand of God upon me." They replied. "Let us start rebuilding." And we read, "So they began this good work."

The opposition began almost immediately as they were mocked and ridiculed by their enemies, but Nehemiah answered, "The God of heaven will give us success. We his servants will start rebuilding." Nehemiah had faith and confidence that, as the missionary Hudson Taylor once said, "God's work done in God's way will not lack God's resources." And so it turned out. Chapter 3 is a fascinating chapter. Although quite difficult to read out loud, it is the list of all those who shared in the building work and the sections of the wall they undertook to rebuild. It shows God's people sharing a common vision working together for a common goal and despite constant threats and intimidation and physically exhausting work they did not quit.

Each time they faced new threats or problems the response was always the same — they prayed. So in chapter 4:6 we read, "So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart." Despite all the opposition from their enemies outside and the discouragements that came from inside the city, the work continued until in chapter 6:15 we read, "So the wall was completed on the 25th of Elul in 52 days. When all our enemies heard about this all the surrounding nations were afraid and lost confidence because they realised that this work had been done with the help of God."

Success – God's work done in God's way will not lack God's resources.

As a church we face the challenge before us, we need to follow the pattern of Nehemiah and the people of Jerusalem - we need to devote ourselves to this good work, we will need each committed family in Railway Street to play their part, to give what they can, and above all to follow Nehemiah's example in response to each new obstacle or challenge – to pray to God for His strength and resources. I am confident as I said last Sunday that with reliance on God we can face this challenge.

But there is something else we need to notice about the book of Nehemiah. The walls are completed by chapter 6 but there are then 7 more chapters to Nehemiah. This demonstrated the physical building was only the start of the work God wanted to do in Jerusalem. God wanted to see the spiritual rebuilding of God's people within these new walls. That was a much longer and tougher assignment but again as before it was covered with careful planning, hard work and devoted prayer and as a result this spiritual work also enjoyed God's blessing and resources.

The completion of the building work on the new Link will be a source of joy. The final payment on it will be an even greater source of joy. But the really important work will begin once we are able to meet within its new walls - in terms of how this new area and a refurbished Minor Hall will enable us to go about the task of building up the people of God and reaching out to connect with others as yet outside the church. I look forward above all to that stage of the work.

The challenge is large, but we have faced such large challenges before and under God we have risen to meet them and I am confident that we will do the same again. So let us, like the people of Jerusalem, fired up by the vision of what is possible, say, "Let us, start rebuilding" and begin this good work in the knowledge that the God of Heaven will give us success. For God's work done in God's way will not lack God's resources.

Yours in His service,

Michael Davidson

The Link Redevelopment Gift Day 13th June 2021



The Bible gives us the principle that our giving to the Lord's work should be in accordance with how the Lord has prospered us. (1 Corinthians 16:2) We give according to what we have, not what we don't have. (2 Corinthians 8:12)

We are aware that over the course of the last year most people's financial circumstances have changed as a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic. This means that

there are those who will not be in a position to give as much. However, there will be others who will maybe, be in a position to give more as a result of having been able to save. We want to encourage all of you who share the Kirk Session & Committee's vision for 'The Link' Redevelopment to give generously in proportion to how the Lord has prospered you.

A good offering on the 13th June will help to resupply our Building Fund before the commencement of construction work, it will also give encouragement to the whole church family as we step forward in faith. In addition, it will also help our treasurer as he begins negotiations with the bank to borrow what we need. A generous offering on this day will help demonstrate to the bank that we can be relied upon to repay the loan we hope they will give us.

You can give in the following ways:

- 1. Return your Gift Day envelope at our Sunday service on 13th June
- 2. Deliver your Gift Day envelopes to the usual addresses.



3. By bank transfer to the Link Project Account, the details are: Sort code - 950361 Account number - 61042858. Please use your FWO number as a reference.

If anyone has any questions, please contact our treasurer Mr Stephen Johnston.





Over the last number of weeks, the six elders elect have been busy. They have met with the Commission of the Dromore Presbytery to introduce themselves and share their faith.

They have also spent several evenings together working through the "Prepared to Lead" Elder's Training Manual. This has been led by our minister along with assistance from Rev Andrew Faulkner & Rev Kenny Hanna.

On the 2nd June they will meet with Rev Dr Marty Cowan to spend an evening looking at what it means to subscribe to the Westminster Confession of Faith.

They will then have a further meeting with the Commission of the Dromore Presbytery to finalise plans for their Ordination & Installation as Ruling Elders in Railway Street Congregation. Like I said they have been busy!

The service of Ordination & Installation will take place (D.V.) on <u>Sunday 20th</u> <u>June at 6:30pm</u>. Please keep this evening free. The service will be both 'in person' and live streamed.

A registration page for those who want to attend in person will be available soon.

We would ask you to continue to pray for God's blessings and guidance for the remainder of this process and to pray that God would prepare, equip and enthuse our new elders as they join our Kirk Session.

PASTORAL MATTERS



We are happy to report that as a result of the easing of lockdown restrictions ministers are now able to visit hospitals much more freely.

Please continue to inform Michael or Heidi if anyone belonging to the congregation is admitted to hospital.

Deaconess Holidays

Please note that Heidi England will be taking a week's holiday from 31st May to 6th June

Pastoral care for Ministers Ministers' Refresh Week 7th to 13th June 2021

The decision has been taken to reschedule the meetings of the General Assembly to October, away from the usual date of the first full week in June. Rather than treating the first week of June as a "normal" week of work the Moderator of the General Assembly is urging all ministers to take a week of refreshment, both for their physical and spiritual well-being. This is not an additional week of holiday, but a time for reading, reflection and physical rest away from the normal round of parish life.

As a result of this you are asked during the week of 7th- 13th June to contact our minister only in cases of pastoral emergencies.

SERVICES FOR JUNE 2021

'The Good, The Bad And the Ugly' Studies in the Book of Judges

6th June

10:30am - Youth Sunday: David Cleland

13th June

10:30am - Judges 5: Charlie Hadjiev

20th June

10:30am - Judges 6: Michael Davidson

6:30pm - Ordination & Installation of the New Elders by the Commission of the Dromore Presbytery

27th June

10:30am - Judges 7: Michael Davidson

Do please remember if you are planning to attend it is vital that you remember to register at attend.railwaystreet.org

Watch online at www.railwaystreet.org

Telephone Line Service - 028 92448979

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

RESPONSE TO THE CHRISTIAN AID WEEK APPEAL 2021

As a congregation it is pleasing to report that our donations to this annual appeal have amounted to £1,692 and, with the addition of gift aid, the sum will exceed £2,000.

Therefore, thanks and appreciation are due to all who have contributed with generosity to this most worthy cause.

'A STROLL IN THE PARK - WITH A DIFFERENCE'

All ladies of the congregation are invited to join us on **Thursday 17th June** at 7.00 pm, meeting in the carpark at Wallace Park, weather permitting. Any change to this date will be announced through the Sunday Service, email or text.

PRAYER FOCUS

Luke 11:1. "Lord, teach us to pray."

Our next prayer focus is planned for **Monday 21**st **June from 8.00 – 9.00pm.** We are hoping to be able to meet together for the first time since lockdown began! Full details of venue will be given nearer the time.

SUMMER CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

During the Summer, our Kids Church & Beginners Church programs will join together on Sunday mornings. This is a good opportunity to give our regular children's ministry leaders a break. Each Sunday we will need 2 leaders to lead this ministry by preparing and delivering the session, which usually includes prayer, some games, a short lesson and a reflection/craft. If you would like to help out with the summer children's ministry, please contact Steven Woods.

CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEE

The next Congregational Committee meeting will be held on **Monday 11th October 2021** at 8pm, venue to be arranged.

DEFIBRILLATOR

The defibrillator will be re-located in June (date to be announced) to the Main Hall fover (Right Hand Side).

Access keys to the Main Hall will be located in a break glass unit in No 31 and in the church vestibule .

CHURCH PROPERTY DATABASE

- A church database has been set up covering and pooling together information regarding the Church premises. Everything from the electrical and wi-fi systems to potentially the new link building.
- Photos, diagrams, lists, technical drawings etc. are being filed away electronically to ensure knowledge gleaned is not lost.
- In the fullness of time, it is envisaged that a 'read only' version will be available on a church computer or even in the cloud!
- No personnel information in any way will be stored on the database.
- Unfortunately, due to Covid, one to one sharing of data is at present not possible. So, please for now send information via e-mail or call Peter Blackman on........

21st - 23rd July, 2021

GANA-HOME CAMP

Let's Go Hydro
Inflatables & Climbing Wall
Nerf Wars
Day Trip to Ganaway

This year we can't go to Ganaway, so we will bring our summer program to Lisburn! Join us at GanaHOME, our 3 day, fun filled program, which includes morning small groups and evening activities!

For more information and to register, go to ganahome.railwaystreet.org. Registration closes Sunday 13th June.

Why Do We Go to Church? - Because We're Forgetful.

(Article written by Peter Newman)



There has been something fundamentally apocalyptic about the COVID-19 pandemic: it has uncovered things about modern life that had previously remained unseen. From the fragility of our sense of security to the promises and perils of modern science, from the fractured condition of our social attachments to the alarmingly conspiratorial habits plaguing much of the American public, the hidden has surely been made manifest as a result of the pandemic.

One thing that has been vividly unearthed is the American

church's relatively weak commitment to regular attendance of Sunday worship. According to Barna research, approximately one in three Christians have stopped attending church altogether (whether in person or online) during the pandemic. An additional third have admitted to streaming a different church service online other than their own—digitally "church hopping," basically—reflecting a certain consumeristic mindset endemic to much of the evangelical church.

All of this provides a fresh chance to consider basic questions: Why do we go to church? What is so important about regularly gathering as God's people? While there are certainly many good answers to this question—it's commanded of us in Scripture, Sabbath rhythms are important, worship is critical to discipleship and evangelism, among others—one key answer is simply this: We go to church because we are forgetful.

Remembering God's Story

Throughout the Bible, we see that God is uniquely concerned about his people's memory. We likewise see that spiritual amnesia is a serious and unremitting problem for these very same people. Endless are the commands to *not forget* God's

deliverance and provision (Deut. 8), to remember his faithfulness (Ex. 13:3), to call to mind his wonderful works in history (Ps. 106). God's people are to know, love, and remember his story. In fact, this story—God's story concerning his people—could reasonably be summarized as: God's people are faithless and forgetful, but the God who has covenanted himself to them in love is faithful and steadfast; he remembers his people.

Our forgetting and God's remembering, then, are part and parcel of the story—the very story God calls us to, well, remember.

What does this have to do with attending Lord's Day worship? We are, as James K. A. Smith and many others have explained, *storied* beings. We crave stories; we need narrative. In a real way, we "tell ourselves stories in order to live." In fact, we need stories to tell us *how* to live, to provide us a script for living, as it were. Alasdair MacIntyre once wrote, "I can only answer the question 'What am I to do?' if I can answer the prior question 'Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?'" Story must always ground action; the narratives that constitute our being necessarily inform our becoming.

Worship Forms Us in God's Story

As storied creatures, we're always imbibing and living out *some* story—be it true or false, good or bad. As Christians we have been summoned by a gracious God to enter into the true story of the whole world. And while it ought to be our duty and delight to do so, we—much like God's people of old—often fail at this task.

We forget God. We fail to remember who he is and who he has called us to be. We imbibe false stories and thus live falsely. This is perhaps especially the case in a world as digitally addicted as ours, where artifice, novelty, and disconnection from the past seem to carry the day. In this overstimulated new media age, we desperately need reminding of who God is, who we are, and what story we're in.

This is where church worship is crucial. In our gathering together as the people of God, we come into his presence to be retold the story of reality; retold what God has done in the person and work of Jesus Christ; and retold what God is now doing in and through his Spirit to redeem and purify a people for himself. This happens in the ordinary liturgy of the church: through prayer and praise, through Word and sacrament. In his provocatively titled *Against Christianity*, Peter Leithart writes:

'Through rituals of worship, we begin to realize together who we are together; of course, we are a sinful people who need to break away from the world, to make a weekly exodus from Egypt; of course, we are an ignorant people who need to be instructed and reminded each week of our language and our story; of course, we are the children of our heavenly Father, who has given all things freely in his Son and displays that gift in the gift of food; of course, we have been engrafted into the

community of the Trinity, for each worship service begins in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and ends with the triune name spoken over us.

For Leithart, it's obvious (as the repeated and italicized "of course" would indicate) that God's people, feeble-hearted and fuzzy-headed as we are, should need to make a weekly exodus from the world to come into God's presence. Worship forms us into the people of God. It instructs us in our story and thereby allows us to, as Leithart later puts it, "name the world Christianly." It reminds us, once again, that we are God's children and called—and empowered—to live as such.

Pressing Need

For a forgetful bunch like us, the regular rhythms of church remind us who God is and who we are—that we are his people in his world.

This, of course, has always been a reason Christians need church, but perhaps it's an even more pressing reason now, in a sped-up digital world where attention spans are shrinking and allegiances are fragmenting. Every day, the internet pulls us in a hundred different directions, into different (and competing) tribes and stories. This was especially true in the last year, when pandemic isolation resulted in our spending even more of our time on the internet.

In a world like this—increasingly artificial, distracting, and, in a way, *unreal*—if we don't carve out at least *one* day a week to be powerfully reminded of our place in the Christian story, our already fragile, fickle, and forgetful hearts will invariably stray from this story. In a world so often distorted by online life, we need the clarifying force of God's Word read, preached, prayed, sung, and tasted.

To stay in and live out God's story, we need to remember it. And to remember it, we need to go to church.



Peter Newman lives with his wife in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and is a member of Christ Community Church (PCA).

This article first appeared on the Gospel Coalition website.

You can find the original article here: Why Do We Go to Church? Because We're Forgetful. (thegospelcoalition.org)

SUNDAYS AT RAILWAY STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

MORNING SERVICE @10.30am to attend please register at: www.railwaystreet.org
Service will be live streamed.

There are no week day activities at present.

Please note change to church office email: office@railwaystreet.org