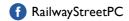
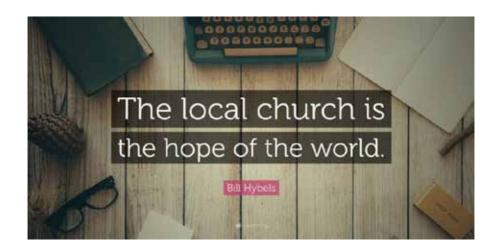


www.railwaystreet.org



September 2021





#### 'The Hope of the World'

Dear friends,

It has been an eventful summer. We had an incredible heat wave in July which, while enjoyed by many, made it very hard to work or sleep. The weather of course broke just after my holidays began and the first three weeks of August were as wet as July was dry. But now that my holidays are over the weather this week is back to warm and sunny!

It has been a busy summer for our young people in Railway Street. We rejoice in two very exciting and rewarding Exodus Teams in Dungannon and Donaghadee and we also rejoice in the great success of our Gana-home programme.

In more recent days, Lowry Construction have begun establishing their compound in our church car park in preparation for work finally commencing on the Link Redevelopment. This is a tremendously exciting moment and we eagerly look forward to the wonderful new facilities that, God willing, will be handed over to RSPC in 10 months' time.

Looking out across our land this summer it is encouraging that Covid-related restrictions have happily continued to ease but worryingly the infection rate

in Northern Ireland remains stubbornly high compared to other parts of the UK. We still face an uncertain autumn and winter.

Internationally this summer things remain chaotic particularly as the covid pandemic continues to cause great challenges and disruption in every corner of the world. In recent days we have witnessed the humiliating and chaotic retreat of the USA and its Western allies from Afghanistan and the apparent triumph of the Taliban in reclaiming power in that land.

As we look at our world in human terms the outlook is not good. I have no doubt that in future decades (if the Lord has not returned) historians will look back and will highlight August 2021 as one of the defining points that signified the decline and collapse of the West, for without a doubt that is what we are witnessing in our days. Having cut itself adrift from the Christian foundations that helped to shape and sustain the West for many centuries, it is striking that our society seems to lack anything of substance to replace it with. We are living in an increasingly nihilistic, divided and self absorbed culture. The West no longer has a coherent world view or morality to it hold together. As I see it, there are now only three great powers left in our world - Islam, Communist China and the third which I will highlight below. So as we look at the Western world in human terms the outlook is not good. But we are not just looking in human terms. As Christians we find our hope and confidence in the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the knowledge that, "the LORD has established his throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all." (Psalm 103:18)

In many ways, we as a group of believers in a local church in Lisburn may feel very inadequate and insignificant in terms of being able to challenge the changes and decay we see all around us and yet, as someone once said, "The local church is the hope of the world." Christ centred, Spirit-filled, Bible focused, outward-looking churches are what can bring hope and positive change to our world. "There's nothing like the local church when the local church is working right – it's the hope of the world." The church of Jesus Christ is the third and final great power left in our world. (Little wonder then that the two other world powers are doing all they can to destroy it!).

Humanly speaking we can make little difference when it comes to the great world shaking events, that is way above our pay grade! So it is good to remember the world is still under God's control and in God's hands. But the

amazing thing is that God chooses to fulfil His plans and purposes by working through His people in the local church

We in RSPC are a local church and so we possess within us the hope of the world. There is nothing like the local church when the local church is working right. Now of course over the last 18 months the local church has not been able to work right. Local churches throughout our land have been separated and restricted during the Covid-19 pandemic. Over the course of two lockdowns we were unable to meet together physically for worship. While we are thankful for the technology that has enabled us to meet virtually, it is no substitute for being able to meet together in person. Our weekly programme has been severely disrupted and even now it is difficult to know just how much of our normal church life can resume this autumn. But still it remains true that the local church is the hope of the world.

We have a message that the people of Lisburn need to hear and to see lived out in everyday lives. We have a message that needs to be shared. There is nothing like the local church when the church is working right. As we seek to refocus and rebuild after 18 months of serious disruption caused by the pandemic, we plan to use the timely and engaging book 'Love Your Church' by Tony Merida to remind ourselves what the church is, why being part of it is exciting, and why it's worthy of our love and commitment. In this book Tony sets out eight privileges and responsibilities of a church member: to belong, to welcome, to gather, to care, to serve, to honour, to witness and to send. These are all marks that are already evident to a greater or lesser degree in Railway Street but we need to refresh our vision and refocus our priorities in these days.

I invite you to join us on this journey, wherever possible in person, as we focus on what it means to be the church and as we seek to grow in our love for the church of Jesus Christ. "There's nothing like the local church when the local church is working right – it's the hope of the world."

Yours in His service,

Michael Davidson

# A Message from Steven Woods



Dear Railway Street Church Family,

It's hard to know what to say (especially with a word limit) when reflecting on my time in the role of Youth & Family Worker here in Railway Street. When I was asked during the Ministry Training interviews to describe my dream job within PCI, I answered that I was currently in my dream job - I was working for a wonderful church family, I was working with a fantastic set of volunteers, a brilliant group of young people and the church was in an exciting time. If it wasn't for a clear sense of call from God into ministry I would

certainly not be leaving (so for those of you who encouraged me to go into ministry - you only have yourselves to blame!).

There have been so many highlights of my last nearly seven years employed by Railway Street. I have loved being part of the journey for so many of our young people and young adults; seeing them grow in their faith, their character, their gifts. I have loved spending Saturday mornings watching your hockey matches and celebrating with you. I have loved leading the teams to Romania and all the fun and adventure that it involved. I loved Ganaway; the GLAs, the fun & hearing each morning at our leadership meeting about the growth in your faith that the leaders were seeing. I loved dinner club. I loved the Young Adults Christmas Dinner. I loved the BB Christmas Market. I loved the Easter program. There are honestly so many memories that I can think of and so many people that have made them. Too many memories to write here and too many in-jokes that I will leave out.

So as I reflect on my time as Youth & Family Worker the main thing that I am filled with is gratitude to you as a church family. You have been so supportive and encouraging during my time here; the constant reminders from many of you about your devoted prayers for our young people, your financial support each summer for our teams & Ganaway and your verbal encouragement to many of our young people are only a few examples of this. I am so thankful that I have been able to work for such a supportive and encouraging church family.

And because you have been so faithful in prayer for me in my role, I would love you to continue to pray for Judah, Rachel and myself as we begin this journey of ministry training. I begin on 6th September (with a two week intensive in Hebrew, which I am dreading...) into full-time study. After the first year, I hope to be placed with a church for the rest of my time in training, alongside studying. Until that point, we will continue to worship in Railway Street on Sundays, which we are so glad about, as it means we can spend a bit more time as part of the Railway Street family. I would love your prayers for us as a family as we navigate new diaries, new finances & new opportunities. I would love your prayers for my study, especially for the languages. And I would love your prayers for our future, that God would make his paths clear and encourage us.

Finally, I'll finish with a verse that by now you know I find great comfort and encouragement in when thinking about the future, because I often use it as a benediction. I'm sure I don't need to explain why. It's a verse that I hope brings comfort and encouragement to all of us here in Railway Street.

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever!" Ephesians 3:20-21

# **Introducing Hannah Craig**

We are pleased to announce that Hannah Craig is to become our new part time Youth Co-ordinator. We look forward to Hannah beginning her service within our church family in September. Below is a brief introduction from Hannah.

'My name is Hannah and I am from East Belfast where I grew up going to Mersey Street Presbyterian Church. For the last number of years I have been serving families in churches in Oxford and Belfast, and have also just finished the Cornhill Training Course.



It has been a joy to enjoy God's Word with children, young people, and their families for the last number of years and I am excited to continue to do that with the church family at Railway Street.

Some things I also love to do are practice calligraphy, sit in a coffee shop with a book or with a friend, and go for a drive to listen to my favourite music.

I am looking forward to getting to know the children and young people at Railway Street and serve them by pointing them to Jesus.'

# **Services for September 2021**

# 'Love Your Church' 8 Great Things About Being A Church Member

### 5<sup>th</sup> September

10:30am - 'Back To School With God' - Family Service

## 12<sup>th</sup> September

10:30am - 'Railway Street: Vision & Values' - Michael Davidson

#### 19th September

10:30am - 'Love Your Church 1: Belonging' - Michael Davidson

#### 26th September

10:30am - 'Love Your Church 2: Welcoming' – Michael Davidson Communion

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

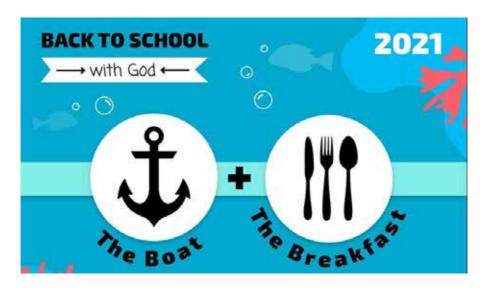
Watch online at www.railwaystreet.org

**Telephone Line Service – 028 92448979** 



# **Railway Street Presbyterian Church**

Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2020 at 10:30am

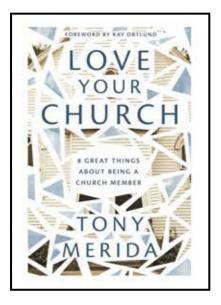


Join us at our All-age Service to pray for and support children, young people and school staff at the start of a new school year.



# **New Teaching Series for this Autumn**

### 'Love Your Church'



## 8 Great Things About Being A Church Member

God calls us to be "devoted to one another in love" (Romans 12:10). What does this look like for us today? How can we be the kind of church member who makes a real difference?

This timely and engaging book 'Love Your Church' by Tony Merida explores what church is, why being part of it is exciting, and why it's worthy of our love and commitment. He sets out eight privileges and responsibilities of a church member: to belong, to welcome, to gather, to care, to serve, to honour, to witness and to send

This is a great book for every member of RSPC to read, especially as we seek to refocus and rebuild after 18 months of serious disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

'Love Your Church' will be our theme and our main teaching series on Sunday mornings this autumn. It will also provide the material for our home groups.

We want as many people in RSPC as possible to read this book for yourselves. The retail price is £7.99 but due to a special offer for churches from the Good Book Company we are able to offer it to you for only £4.00. Copies will be available from Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> September or from the church office.

Your can watch a short promotional video from author Tony Merida here: Love Your Church by Tony Merida - YouTube



# Railway Street on Facebook



We hope you know that you can find Railway Street Presbyterian Church on Facebook.

On the church's page you will find regular updates and information about what is going on in RSPC.

By liking, and especially by sharing posts with others, you can help to increase the profile of our church in the local community and beyond.

You can find us here: www.facebook.com/RailwayStreetPC



#### **ANNOUNCMENTS**

**DEATHS**: It is with sadness we record the death of Mrs Myrtle Campbell on 29<sup>th</sup> August. We extend our sympathy and prayers to all the family at this difficult time.

# Link summary update

Up until 11th August, when the builders' work huts arrived, and car parking began to get disrupted as the compound started to get erected, anyone about the Church premises could be forgiven for thinking that there was not a lot happening. I can assure you that during this time we were working hard to finalise a number of the business and contract items and address some of the technical items. All the contract information has now been provided and the contract has been completed, so we hope to have it signed within the next few weeks.

The builders are continuing to prepare their site compound and are bringing more of their equipment on site, also they are carrying out the preliminary work of preparing to strip out the building. The next major event scheduled is a technical meeting on 2nd September between our Architect Judith Hamilton, our Consulting Engineer Peter Scott, our Builder Stephen Lowry, supported by a small selected Church team. This will be mainly to focus on the practicalities and challenges of supporting the upper wall, that is included in the planning approval in order to maintain heritage requirements, while removing the lower wall and then getting the piling requirements carried out.

The compound, along with the Link and Minor hall area, are now the responsibility of the builder and are out of bounds to members of the Congregation unless by agreement with the builder. As work progresses we plan to continually take photographs of key activities in order to keep everyone updated on progress.

In tandem with this work, the financial side of the project has continued to progress over the Summer. We are very grateful to the congregation for your continued generous financial support. Once Gift Aid was added, the total Gift Day offering for the Link Appeal was £80,300 a truly wonderful amount that has helped increase that balance in this fund to almost £230,000.

We are also very grateful to our bank for providing us with a loan of up to £800,000 with a fine interest rate margin and discounted arrangement fee. The structure of this offer means that we will only need to draw down the amount we need, so continued generous giving will mean that we will borrow less. Over the last number of weeks we have identified 5 potential sources of grant funding. At the time of writing applications have been submitted to 4 of these with the last application due to be submitted in early September.

Many thanks for your continuing support for our Link Redevelopment.

#### **CAR PARK**

As you can see the contractors have erected barriers in the Church car park to secure the site for safety reasons. We now have very limited congregational parking spaces, so would ask members not to park in the numbered commercial spaces. As the car park will likely be in this way until late next year, we are not asking people to renew their car park fobs in December 2021 for 2022. All fobs will still be active and if there is a space in the car park you can use it. Please be mindful that there are a lot of members who have fobs and therefore use the car park sparingly. We will renew the fobs in December 2022 for use in 2023. Thank you for your patience and understanding during this time of disruption.

Maurice Gowdy, Commercial Car Park Administrator Ian Barron, Congregational Car Park Administrator.

**KIRK SESSION MEETING:** The next business meeting will be on **Monday 13**<sup>th</sup> **September** at 7.30pm.

#### **LADIES BIBLE STUDY**

A Ladies Bible study has been planned to take place via Zoom on a fortnightly basis between September and Christmas. Heidi will lead the study and all ladies are welcome. The first meeting will be on **Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> September**, **from 10.30 - 11.30am.** If you would like to receive the zoom link please speak to Heidi or Heather Henry.



Guest Speaker is Sophie de Witt, a Christian author who ministers in Cape Town South Africa with her husband. She is passionate about One to One discipleship across the generations. The link to access the conference is

<u>www.presbyterianireland.org/PresbyterianWomenAnnualConference2021</u> which will go live just before the starting time of 10.30am

The first meeting of PW will be held on **Monday 27**<sup>th</sup> **September 2021** at 8pm. *"Conversation, Coffee and Cake."* An opportunity to share Scripture verses (in a creative way) which have had special meaning to us over these past months and enjoy a cup of coffee and a slice of celebration cake to mark our first meeting of the session.

Please bring your bibles. All ladies of the congregation are very welcome. The meeting will take place according to the guidelines in place at this time. **PLEASE NOTE** that as a result of works in the carpark PW meetings will be held on the  $4^{th}$  Monday of each month in the Main Hall.



Welcome back to 422

Subject to government restrictions and PCI guidelines, we hope that 422 will resume on **Thursday 23**<sup>rd</sup> **September 2021**. More detailed information will follow but please save the date!

#### **COLLECTION OF USED STAMPS**

The Leprosy Mission NI can no longer accept any used stamps or obsolete coins. They have sent us a letter of sincere appreciation for our help in this way over many years.

From now on, however, we will still collect stamps and donate them to Save the Children. Please place any used stamps in an envelope and put them on the offering plate or pass them to Edith McConnell. Thank you.

# SUNDAYS AT RAILWAY STREET 10.30am

# MORNING SERVICE BEGINNERS CHURCH - MAIN HALL KIDS CHURCH - No. 3 I YOUTH CHURCH - Brownlee Room

to attend please register at: www.railwaystreet.org
Service will be live streamed.

#### **START DATES:**

Ladies Bible Study
Thursday 16th September - 10.30-11.30am on zoom.

#### **PW**

Monday 27th September at 8pm (meeting will be held on the 4th Monday of each month in the Main Hall)

#### 422

Thursday 23rd September (details to follow)

Other organisations will recommence as the loosening of Covid-19 restrictions allow.