





*When I consider the work of Your fingers,
what is man that You are mindful of him?*

Psalms 8 : 3-4

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Dear friends,

Are you fed up hearing about 'Partygate' yet? I know I am! Just in case you have somehow been marooned on a desert island without wi-fi for the last few weeks let me remind you what Partygate is. It already has its own official definition on Wikipedia – 'Partygate is an ongoing political scandal surrounding gatherings or parties of United Kingdom government and Conservative Party Staff that took place during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021 when there were public health restrictions that prohibited specific types of gatherings.'

Such is the Main Stream Media's obsession with this issue you could be forgiven for thinking that nothing else of note is currently happening in the world. You could end up thinking that we are not facing an energy price crisis that is driving many more people into fuel poverty. You would think that, alongside that, the cost of living is not actually rising rapidly as a result of rampant inflation so that the money in your pocket or tucked away in the bank account earning 0.05% interest does not have the same buying power it had 6 months ago. You would think that Europe is not on the brink of war as Russia continues to mass literally hundreds of thousands of troops and weapons on the border with Ukraine.

In the midst of all this is 'Partygate' really worthy of so much attention? I know and understand that many people are genuinely angry. The government imposed on us incredibly tight restrictions as it sought to combat the Covid-19 pandemic. We have lived through the restriction of our personal liberty to a degree we could never even

have imagined this time two years ago and I know full well the many sacrifices made and the hardships endured by members of RSPC. It causes us anger when it appears that those who made the rules somehow saw themselves as being above the rules.

Now I am no fan of Boris Johnston. I think it is a sad indictment on our nation that its Prime Minister is a serial adulterer whose behaviour seems to be governed not by strong principles and moral integrity but rather by selfish ambition and vain conceit. But at the same time, it seems to me that especially among media there is a strong element of hypocrisy and faux outrage around their obsession with this whole affair. It seems clear that a large section of the media has a personal animosity towards Boris because he got Brexit done.

When Jesus encountered the crowd who had caught the woman caught in adultery they said to him, **“Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?”** Jesus replied, **“Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.”** We are told that the crowd one by one drifted away until only Jesus and the woman remained.

How many of us can honestly hold up our hands and say that we not did at some point break the lockdown rules? How many of us are without sin? No one! Yet we often do expect higher standards of our leaders than we expect of ourselves. Is that really fair?



In season 6 of the America TV drama 'The West Wing' the Democratic Party are choosing their presidential candidate to succeed President Jed Bartlett. There is a controversy when it emerges that one of the candidates did not disclose his wife's history of depression. Another one of the candidates Congressman Matt Santos, who goes on to secure the nomination, addresses the convention and says this,

'Now there has been a great deal made about Governor Baker's decision not to disclose his wife's minor medical condition. Many people believe that he should have. But I don't believe Governor Baker failed to disclose it because he was ashamed or embarrassed. I think he didn't disclose it because we're the hypocrites, not the Bakers; because we're all broken, every single one of us, and yet we pretend that we're not. We all live lives of imperfection and yet

we cling to this fantasy that there's this perfect life and that our leaders should embody it. But if we expect our leaders to live on some higher moral plain than the rest of us, well we're just asking to be deceived."

Now I know this is from a fictional TV show but there is a lot of truth in those words. We should know by now that if we expect our leaders to live on some higher moral plain than the rest of us, we are just asking to be disappointed. Over the last two years my mind has come back time and time again to those words in Psalm 146, **"Do not put your trust in princes, in mortal men, who cannot save."**

I agree whole heartedly that we are all broken, every single one of us, for that is what the Bible tells us, **"For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God."** (Romans 3:23) But there is just one aspect of Matt Santos' speech I take issue with, "we cling to this fantasy that there's this perfect life." Because the Bible tells us there is one person who did live the perfect life. There is one person who did not break the rules he had made for others. There is one person who walked on this earth who was without sin and that is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 4 tells us, **"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin."**

Jesus lived that perfect life and so was then able to offer up the perfect sacrifice for broken people. On the cross he took all our failures and rule breaking upon himself and paid the price for them. We don't put our trust in 'princes, in mortal men who cannot save.' Instead, we put our trust and confidence in the one who alone was without sin. We put our trust and confidence in the Prince of Peace, in the one who died for us and who rose again, **'for the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.'** (Romans 10:11)

Let us keep looking to Jesus and pointing others to Jesus. Finally let us make sure that rather than simply criticise and condemn our leaders, like the media and many others, we pray for them instead. Boris Johnston and the other members of our government need Jesus as their Saviour and Lord too. Were that to happen that really would begin to transform our nation for the better.

Yours in His service,

Michael Davidson

Services for February & March

Mornings

'Strangers In A Strange Land' - Studies in Daniel – Michael Davidson

'A Great Salvation' - Studies In Hebrews – Charlie Hadjiev

Evenings

'Mission Possible' Acts 13 & 14

6th February

10:30am - Daniel 2:24-49 'The King Of Dreams Part 2'

Michael Davidson

6:30pm - Acts 14:1-20 'A Tale Of Three Cities'

Michael Davidson

13th February

10:30am - Hebrews 3:1-4:13 'Enter God's Rest'

Charlie Hadjiev

20th February

10:30am - Daniel 3:1-30 'Saints In The Hands Of A Saving God'

Michael Davidson

6:30pm - Acts 14:21-28 'Mission Update'

Michael Davidson

27th February

10:30am - Hebrews 4:14-5:10 'A Great High Priest'

Charlie Hadjiev

6th March

10:30am - Daniel 4 'The Fall & Rise Of A King'

Michael Davidson

6:30pm - Young Adults

13th March

10:30am - PW Service - Mrs Karen Craig

20th March

10:30am - Hebrews 5:11-6:20 'A Steadfast Anchor For The Soul'

Charlie Hadjiev

6:30pm - Steven Woods

27th March

Communion

10:30am - Daniel 5 'The Writing On the Wall'

Michael Davidson

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

Watch online at www.railwaystreet.org

Telephone Line Service – 028 92448979



Following Christ, Serving the Community

FULL MEMBERSHIP CLASSES

There are two types of 'members' associated with Railway Street Presbyterian church. There are those who attend services, who send their children to youth organisations and who give financially to the church, but they have not made a public profession of faith in Christ. They are described as **adherents**. The other kind of member is a '**full**' or '**communicant**' member. These are people who have come to faith in Christ and have made a public declaration of their faith.

Being a full member of the church brings privileges that are not available to adherents. For example only full members are eligible to vote on matters such as electing new elders or committee members, or calling a new minister or a vote involving any other significant decision affecting the life of the congregation.

There are two ways to be received into full membership:

1. Transferring From Another Congregation

If you have previously been a member of a congregation elsewhere you can ask that church to provide you with a transfer certificate or a letter that confirms you are a member in good standing in that church. That transfer certificate is then presented to the Kirk Session in Railway Street for their approval.

2. Becoming A Member By Profession of Faith

Those who have not previously been received as full members are asked to attend a short series of Membership Classes. These look at what is involved in becoming a full member of the congregation.

These are open to people of all ages and typically contain people in their teens right up to those of retirement age. You may have been born into Railway Street church or you have maybe started coming in more recent times, all are welcome.

After completing the classes, you will meet with our minister personally to discuss what you have heard and whether or not you wish to come forward for membership. Those coming forward are then presented to the elders for their approval.

It is hoped that these classes will take place on **Sunday afternoons from 3-4pm beginning on 27th February.**

If you are interested in attending the classes either speak to Michael Davidson directly or contact him by text or email. **(07787912072 & mdavidson@presbyterianireland.org)**



DEATHS:

It is with sadness we record the following deaths:

Mrs Pat Hanna on 13th December

Mr James Hutton on 21st January

Mr Matt Crothers on 31st January.

The congregation extends their sympathy and prayers to all these families at this time of loss.

The **CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEE** meeting will be held on **Monday 14th February** at 8pm in the Meeting House.

The Finance Sub-Committee will not meet before the main Committee.

YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S LEADERS TRAINING will take place on **Wednesday 23rd February 2022**. We are looking forward to an evening of encouragement and training for all youth and children's leaders led by Pete Wright from Growing Young Disciples. GYD is an organisation that trains, advises and resources youth and children's leaders to help them think biblically about their ministry. I'm praying that it will be a helpful evening for us all. For more details, please connect Hannah on hannah@railwaystreet.org



LADIES' ZOOM BIBLE STUDY will take place on **Thursday 10th & 24th February** also on **Thursday 10th & 24th March** at 10.30 am. Anyone wishing to join should contact Heather Henry or Heidi.



PRAYER FOCUS

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

There is a noticeable stretch in the evenings so getting to the monthly Prayer Focus no longer will be in the dark! Let us join together to give thanks, to seek God's will for the year ahead and to pray for revival.

We plan to meet on Monday 21st February from 8.00-9.00pm in no 31 and on Monday 21st March from 8.00-9.00pm in no 31

Please put these dates in your diary and do come along!



P.W. Meeting on Monday 28th February.

Our speaker is Fiona Clarke. Fiona works in a local school and is going to share with us personal reflections on her spiritual journey. She is also going to bring samples of her crochet with her.

P.W. Service on Sunday 13th March.

The guest speaker will be Mrs Karen Craig, P.W. President 2019 – 2020.

In November 2019 Karen visited Nepal where she met staff at Okhaldhunga Community Hospital. The work at the Mothers' Waiting Home is being supported by the Special Overseas Project for 2020/2022.

There will be a retiring offering to support the P.W. Mission Fund for home and overseas. Your contribution can be gift aided using the envelopes which will be available at the service.

P.W. Meeting on Monday 28th March at 8pm.

'Seek, serve and follow Christ' – the motto of the G.B. We will hear about our newly formed G.B. Company from some of its leaders.

By reflecting on three women in the Bible we will explore how God wants us to aspire to be women of faith and serve and follow Christ.



FEBRUARY: On **Thursday 24th February** at 3pm we hope to have another time together to enjoy tea/coffee at Hampton's on Harry's Road. If you would like to join us please ring Heather or Colin by **Tuesday 15th February**. The cost will be £4.50.

MARCH: T3, a new conference centre at Vic Ryn, is the venue for a talk, chat and a cup of tea. Please note the time 2.30pm and the change of date **Thursday 31st March**. There is no need to book.

BIBLE DISCOVERY GROUP will meet on **Thursday 3rd & 17th February** and on **Thursday 3rd & 17th March** at 10.30am in No 31.



USED STAMPS COLLECTION

Please donate any unwanted used stamps to Save the Children Fund. There is a box on the vestibule table for this purpose or they can be given to any member of Helping Hands.

WOOLLY HATS FOR SEAFARERS

Having a winter clear out? Been busy knitting? If you have surplus woolly hats of any sort - hand-knitted or not - please consider donating them to Colin Jenkins (a former member of Railway Street) who works as a chaplain to seafarers in the port of Cork and loves to have hats to give to these men and women who brave the seas to bring us so much of what we eat or use in our homes. Colin will be in Lisburn on 17th February so if possible, please give any items to Heather Henry or Edith McConnell before that date.

Link – February Update

As we have come to the end of 2021 and embark on the opportunities and challenges of 2022, we would firstly like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has helped and supported this activity, either individually, or as part of small specialist support teams. There is still a lot of work to do, so everyone's support is still crucial to our success.



Currently the old link building has been demolished, except for the section that needs to be retained and this is currently being supported by a specially made support structure. The piling has been completed, also the foundations have been dug out, the sub structure drainage and concrete sub floor has also been completed.

As we move forward into the new year, we are now at the stage of building back, the next stage is the fabrication and erection of the steelwork. We have now held our 5th site meeting and going forward we plan to start holding the various technical meetings with our consultants, the builder, and his various specialist sub-contractors.

The old hall kitchen has been stripped out and the kitchen team, with Committee approval, have selected and ordered the new kitchen, and with PW financial support have also been able to order the kitchen equipment.

The finishes team have also been meeting, and after some discussions have selected the



colour for the carpet tiles in the main welcome and seating areas. Further meetings are planned to further develop the finishes and furnishings requirements.



We are very grateful to our congregation for all your generous giving during 2021 with gifts of £165,000 (including Gift Aid) received into the Bank during the year. In addition to this we have received a grant of £20,000 from the All Churches Trust at the end of 2021. This means that in total we have now raised around 40% of the total

project cost, a truly remarkable achievement.

Thanks to everyone for your continued support.

Ivan Woods / Stephen Johnston

LETTER FROM IMRE AND NOEMI ZOLD - JANUARY 2022

I would like to wish you all a blessed and happy year in 2022 by the words of God: Psalm 92, 13-15:

Those that be planted in the house of the LORD shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing; To show that the LORD is upright: he is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him.

We read at the beginning of the Psalm 92 that it is a hymn for Sabbath. The day when the Lord's chosen people must be still and look to the Almighty to receive peace and joy. Israel already knows that the real peace is coming only if God is standing up and liberates them from the enemy. Yahweh is glorified in what He has done for the people, He gives comfort too. The enemy is conquered, and the righteous people are flourishing, bringing fruits, Lord is upright, He is my rock. It was so encouraging to read this wonderful psalm in the first day of 2022. I wish you this peace, joy, comfort, flourishing and fruitful life in this year. Do not forget: HE IS MY ROCK.

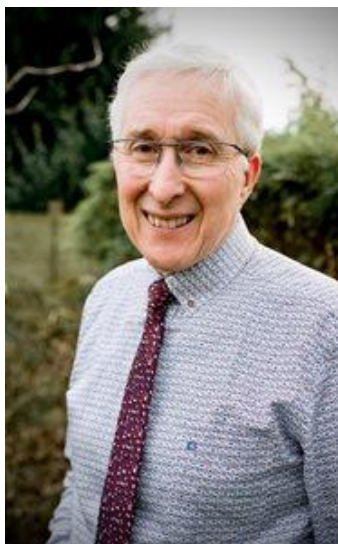
We are fine in the family even though three weeks ago Noemi was infected again by the covid. She is vaccinated and she had covid one year ago too. She is fine now and back in the school. Vera is keeping well. She likes the conservatorium very much; this week is when they have the instrument exams. She is very busy. Dora finishes the primary school (age 14) in this year. They had the big exam last Saturday. She would like to continue her studies where Vera is going too. Aron and Kata are in the primary school and doing well.

I do my ministry among the Jewish people, and I do my family therapy course too. It is a nice challenge. I like it very much.

On behalf of my family, I would like to say thank you to all of you for long term financial support. I do not really know who was supporting us but please pass my greetings and thanks to all of them. I was able to transfer the money until the end of last year, but I no longer have access to the bank account.

I wish you all the best and greetings to all our friends in Railway Street.
Yours, Imre and family

Portrush Minister to be PCI's next Moderator



Ministers and elders from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's (PCI) 19 regional presbyteries met across Ireland on the evening of 1st February and chose Portrush minister, Rev John Kirkpatrick, to be the Church's next Moderator.

Known as the Moderator-Designate until the Church's General Assembly in June, he will formally succeed the current Moderator, Right Reverend Dr David Bruce, as PCI's principal public representative at this summer's meeting. A son and grandson 'of the Manse' – he was one of four nominees that the all-Ireland denomination had to choose from this year, which traditionally elects its Moderator-Designate on the first Tuesday in February.

Alongside Mr Kirkpatrick, this year's nominees were Rev Dr Colin McClure, minister of First Larne

Presbyterian Church, Rev Dr Trevor McCormick, minister of Frist Kilrea and Boveedy Presbyterian Churches and Rev Alastair McNeely, minister of Richhill Presbyterian Church. Each received the following votes:

- **Rev John Kirkpatrick** 10 votes: The Presbyteries of Ballymena, North Belfast, South Belfast, East Belfast, Dromore, Dublin & Munster, Iveagh, Omagh, Templepatrick and Tyrone
- **Rev Dr Colin McClure** 1 vote: The Presbytery of Carrickfergus
- **Rev Dr Trevor McCormick** 3 votes: The Presbyteries of Coleraine & Limavady, Newry, and Route
- **Rev Alastair McNeely** 5 votes: The Presbyteries of Ards, Armagh, Derry & Donegal, Down, Monaghan.

Having received the most votes from the Church's 19 presbyteries, Mr Kirkpatrick will be the denomination's 177th Moderator since 1840 and its first from Portrush Presbyterian Church.

Speaking about his election, the 65-year-old North Coast minister said, "I am genuinely surprised by what has happened, but very excited at the prospect of the story God is going to write from June and the months that follow. As I continue to serve the Lord Jesus in this new role, I am looking forward to coming alongside our churches at this critical time, encouraging them as we move forward from Covid. I

also look forward to building good relationships wherever possible, honouring Jesus and representing our Church across the island and further afield.”

Born in Limavady, Mr Kirkpatrick was brought up from the age of three in Ballymena. A third generation Presbyterian minister – his father had been minister of Balteagh Presbyterian, near Limavady, while his grandfather had also served in congregations in Counties Donegal, Tyrone and Antrim - Mr Kirkpatrick has been minister of Portrush Presbyterian for nearly 30 years, having served in the holiday town since 1993. Prior to that, he spent nearly six years in Garryduff Presbyterian near Ballymoney, his first congregation. He was ordained in 1985 as an assistant minister in Megain Memorial and Mersey Presbyterian Churches in East Belfast. When he became minister in Portrush, he also represented PCI in its partner relationships in Central and Eastern Europe until 2005.

Having attended Ballymena County Primary School and Coleraine Academical Institution, he went on to study farm management at Greenmount Agricultural College from 1973-1976, with an agri career in mind. This led to three years of study at the University of Ulster’s, Coleraine campus, where in 1979 he gained a BSc in Social Science and Environmental Studies. After spending a year working for the Department of Agriculture, in 1981 he attended Belfast Bible College before starting his studies at Union Theological College for the ordained ministry of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the same year.

Talking about his faith, Mr Kirkpatrick said, “With a father and a grandfather as Presbyterian ministers, you might say that I am not only ‘a son of the Manse’, but ‘a grandson of the Manse’ as well. While I came to a personal faith in Jesus at the age of nine, there was never an expectation that I would follow in their footsteps. But God, obviously, had other plans and I genuinely give thanks for the near 40 years I have spent in the ordained ministry.”

Today he ministers to a congregation of around 220 families in and around the seaside town, which grows considerably during the summer months and at Easter. “I would describe myself as a ‘preaching pastor’, as I see the linked importance of preaching and teaching the Bible, coupled with pastoral care being the complimentary need to this.

“The issues that we face at Portrush Presbyterian Church, or ‘PPC’, are set against the context of the 21st century, a secular society, but a hungry society. In my time in PPC we have reflected the wider cultural trends, which I am glad to say have been away from ‘nominalism’ and traditional church attendance, to a more committed church community living in a community where outwardly church is less important, but certainly not without value.

“Primarily we love to share the Good News in all ways we can, but we know we must earn trust and respect. In this, we see the location of PPC as critical to a very wide community of visitors and friends, helped by street gospel distributions and other opportunities as cultural moments in the town provide platforms for evangelism. As Moderator, I want to translate the life and experience of ministry in Portrush, both church and community, to a bigger canvas, but with the same vision and pattern,” he said.

Mr Kirkpatrick also explained that building relationships with the community, and serving the community, were both important. “We see our presence as a gospel one, building relationships with all where we can; people and organisations are part of this involvement from our local schools, to the PPC’s shop in the town that connects with community in a different way and funds various community projects. We also encourage our members to be active in the community in various ways through the RNLI and REACH, for example, a community project which took on a greater significance due to Covid.”

With regards to the pandemic, he said that while the lockdown was difficult for so many different reasons, it also created an opportunity to try new things. “We did recorded services and streaming services. I did a daily devotional called ‘Side-by-Side’ and a video reading of several appropriate books such as ‘The hiding place’ by Corrie ten Boom, ‘To a different drum’ by Pauline Hamilton, and Elizabeth Kuhn’s, ‘Green leaf in drought’ as I wanted to encourage our people in their isolation.”

Married to Joan for 40 years this summer, a palliative care nurse, they have four children and five grandchildren. “Thursday was baking day in our home during the lockdown when Joan baked. The following day I was able to deliver to folk as part of my rounds, giving me a chance to listen to them and pray for them on the doorstep, or in their garden. We’ve made every effort to be in church and have life back when we were given the chance. Thankfully we have a big building, which has meant we could welcome everyone back safely.”

Thinking about his forthcoming year in office, Mr Kirkpatrick said, “For everyone, the last two years have seen all aspects of life, and Church life with it, turned upside down and the story still isn’t over yet. As time moves on, I hope and pray that we will be able to process the many painful memories that it has left behind. I appreciate that this will not be an easy, or a straightforward journey for everyone, as our stories are all different.

“With this in mind, as Moderator, I look forward to visiting congregations, ministers and their families, seeing what they have been through, how they have coped, and ministering into that. Stepping into my predecessor’s shoes after two years will not

be easy, and I pay tribute to Dr Bruce as he has led the Church through this time of national and global crisis. Whatever the year may hold, I am thankful to God, that I won't be undertaking it alone, and certainly not in my own strength, for Jesus will be with me!"

When Mr Kirkpatrick is not in the pulpit, or visiting members of his congregation, he says that he enjoys walking, reading, watching films and listening to an eclectic mix of music. His more active pursuits include a love of motorcycle sport, motocross and motorcycle racing. Since 1994, he has been Race Chaplain to the Motor Cycle Union of Ireland. He also enjoys gardening and bee keeping.

Mr Kirkpatrick will be officially nominated to this year's General Assembly at its opening night in Belfast on 22 June when he will succeed the current Moderator, Rt Rev Dr David Bruce. Dr Bruce will continue in office as the PCI's principal public representative until then.

SUNDAYS AT RAILWAY STREET
MORNING SERVICE 10.30AM
BEGINNERS CHURCH – NO 31
KIDS CHURCH – MAIN HALL
YOUTH CHURCH – Brownlee Room

To attend please register at :

www.railwaystreet.org

Service will be live streamed.

Evening Service – 6.30pm (see services page for details)

BOYS' BRIGADE

Monday - Company Section 7.30-9:00pm

Tuesday - Anchor Boys – 6.30-7:30pm &

Junior Section – 7.00-8:15pm

GIRLS' BRIGADE

Thursdays

Tiny Tots & Explorers - 6:00-7:00pm

Juniors, Seniors & Brigaders - 7:30-9:00pm

PRAYER FOCUS

3rd Monday of each month 8.00-9.00pm

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Fourth Monday of each month

Main Hall at 8:00pm

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Thursday 24th February 3-4pm - Hamptons

Thursday 31st March 2.30-4pm - Vic Ryn T3

Bible Discovery Group

1st & 3rd Thursday of the month at 10.30am

LADIES ZOOM BIBLE STUDY

2nd & 4th Thursday of the month
at 10.30am