

www.railwaystreet.org



November 2022

HANDING OVER THE KEYS TO THE LINK ...



FOLLOWING CHRIST SERVING THE COMMUNITY

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'Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labour in vain.' (Psalm 127:1)

Dear friends,

After five years of planning, praying and preparing and 13 months of demolition and rebuilding it is so good to be able to report that as a congregation we took control of the new Link and the refurbished Minor Hall on Wednesday 19th October.

There are still some ongoing works taking place, as well as the inevitable snagging list to work through, but the building is now in our hands. We are now equipping and furnishing it and beginning to familiarise ourselves with all the new technology.

Many of you have now had the opportunity to take a tour through it and I hope that you, like me, are impressed with what we have been able to achieve in this new space. One of the most often heard comments so far is that people can't believe just how much space there was between the Meeting House and Minor Hall in which we

have constructed our new welcome area.



As a congregation we are thankful to many people. We are very grateful to Judith Hamilton our architect for drawing up our plans and steering us through this whole process just as she steered us through the two earlier phases of work in our Meeting House.

We are also very grateful to our contractors Lowry Construction

Ltd and all their subcontractors for the quality of the work that they have done.

We are incredibly thankful to Ivan Woods who has been the congregation's project

manager who, with great wisdom, patience and perseverance, has given so much time and effort to see us reach this point. Along with him we thank all those who have served on various sub committees.

We have received wonderful new facilities upstairs and downstairs in the Link. We have



also received a Minor Hall that looks and feels like a brand new hall. These will be a wonderful tool for us a congregation as we seek to follow Christ and serve the community.

In Nehemiah 6:15 we read, "So the wall was completed on the twenty fifth of Elul, in 52 days." Jerusalem was, for the first time in over a century, defended by a new wall and new gates. Gate keepers and guards were then appointed.

What did the people of Jerusalem do next? In chapter 8 we read, "When the seventh month came and the Israelites had settled in their towns, all the people came together as one in the square before the Water Gate. They told Ezra, the teacher of the Law, to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded for Israel."

One of their first acts, after completing the building, was to gather as one in Jerusalem to worship God and to listen to His Word. They acknowledged their God and worshipped Him as the One who had helped and sustained them and had enabled them to fulfil the vision God had given to them through Nehemiah.

As we celebrate the completion of our building work we want to do the same - we want to worship and give thanks to God for having led and helped us this far.

We are going to do that through a service of Thanksgiving and Dedication of the Link on Friday 18th November 2022 at 7:30pm. The preacher that night will be the Rt Rev Dr John Kirkpatrick – the Moderator of the General Assembly who will also officially open the building. The Moderator had an opportunity to see around the new facilities while he was on his tour of the Dromore Presbytery last month. I want to encourage us to gather together as one, along with many invited guests, as we bring our thanksgiving to God for having reached this point.

However, that is not the end of the journey for us as a congregation - it is only the beginning. After rebuilding the walls the people of Jerusalem discovered this was only the start of God's plan. There was much more that he wanted to do within those new walls amongst His people.

The same is true for us. We hope to bring the new Link and Minor Hall into use over the course of November as we begin to use it for God's glory and as we seek to 'follow Christ and serve the community.' I pray that these facilities will help us to build and develop links between those of all ages in the Railway Street church family and that we will be able to use them as a link to build relationships with others in our wider community. That is, as it was for the people of Jerusalem, and it will be a longer journey than the time of building but it an exciting journey to be starting out on.

In addition we have the challenge of paying back the money we have had to borrow in order to complete the work. Our treasurer Gordon Wallace has written a short piece about our current financial situation in this bulletin. The full financial picture will be clearer by the beginning of January. But let me say this - I am incredibly thankful for the giving of God's people in Railway Street this far which has meant that we have not needed to borrow as much as was originally envisaged. However the reality is that we have still had to borrow a considerable amount and we need to begin to reduce this debt as quickly as possible.

To that end we will be using the weekend of 18th-20th November as a Gift Weekend where we would once again encourage you to give what you can to help us begin to pay back our loan. Some of you have already given very generously, even sacrificially and may not be in a position to give as much this time. Others of us may be in a better position to give more generously this time. The really important thing is the desire and the willingness to give. As Paul wrote to the church in Corinth, "If the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have." (2 Corinthians 8:12)

I am confident, because I know you and I know how you have responded to needs in the past, so that with God's help we will clear this debt sooner rather than later.

Someone recently shared this verse from 1 Samuel 7:12 on the WhatsApp Encourage One Another Group - "Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far the LORD has helped us." (Ebenezer means stone of help)

So let us give thanks to God for His help thus far as we celebrate the completion of

the building work and as we dedicate our new building to His glory and begin to use it for His work. We look back with thankfulness and we look forward with faith.

Yours in His service,

Michael Davidson



Cover photo: Mr Stephen Lowry of Lowry Construction Limited handing over the keys to Mr Ivan Woods, the congregation's Project Manager. Also included are

Rev. Michael Davidson and Mrs Judith Hamilton our architect.



Following Christ, Serving the Community

Services for November

6th November

10:30am - Genesis 5:18-24 'Walking With God - the Life of Enoch' Stephen Johnston

6:30pm - Tom Finnegan (student assistant Hillhall Presbyterian)

13th November

10:00am-10:45am -Family Service (Romania & Ganaway Reports)

11:30am - Royal British Legion Remembrance Service



20th November



6:30pm - 1 Timothy 2:1-7 'God Save the King' - Michael Davidson

27th November

10:30am COMMUNION Hebrews 13 'A Sacrifice of Praise' Charlie Hadjiev



4th December 10:30am Christmas Gift Service

6:30pm - 1 Timothy 2:9-15 'What Paul Really Said About Women in the Church' Michael Davidson

> Watch online at www.railwaystreet.org Telephone Line Service - 028 92448979



Following Christ, Serving the Community

Remembrance Sunday 13th November 2022





This year it is once again Railway Street's turn to host the Lisburn Royal British Legion Service of Remembrance. We have been told to expect up to 400 members of the Royal British Legion, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Councillors and army cadets to be coming to this service. This will fill the entire downstairs of the Meeting House and part of the gallery, leaving limited room for our own congregation.

For this reason the Kirk Session have decided that on Sunday 13th November we will once again hold two morning services.

The first will be for **Railway Street families** and will take place from **10:00am** and will finish before **11:00am**. There will be a short act of remembrance at this service. It will also feature reports from our Exodus Romania teams and our Ganaway Camp. We would ask all those attending to please sit downstairs.

The Royal British Legion Remembrance Service will then take place at 11:30am. Members of Railway Street are warmly welcome to attend this service and are asked to sit in the unreserved sections of the gallery. The congregation's wreath will be laid at this service.

You are of course welcome to attend both services if you wish.



Link Redevelopment

Service of Thanksgiving and Dedication

On Friday 18th November at 7.30pm

Preacher: Rt Rev Dr J Kirkpatrick Moderator of the General Assembly



GIFT WEEKEND

18th - 20th November

Let us continue to walk forwards in faith trusting that God's work, done in God's way, never lacks God's resource.

Gifts can be given in the following ways:

Return your Gift envelope on Friday or Sunday or
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.

Thank you.

A WORD FROM THE TREASURER

After several years of generous support, it is a delight to see the new building work (almost) completed.

As we knew at the start of the process, we were always going to have to borrow a significant amount of money and to date we have a loan with the Danske Bank of £475,000 with a few (hopefully small) bills still due.

Whilst we have managed to raise a similar amount due to your generous support so far, we really need to be reducing this loan as much as possible as even the very competitive 4% interest rate still amounts to almost £1,600 a month in increasing debt and would only just be covered by the current monthly giving to the fund.

Undoubtedly, members of the congregation have diverted their giving to the fund and, particularly in the current economic turmoil, we are not immune from having to pay the increasing bills, with the result that the main no1 account and cash flow remains tight.

As such, and as we move towards the end of another financial year, can I encourage any members who intend to make contributions before the end of the year, to do so at an early stage as we manage our funds over the incoming difficult winter period in order to assist with the cashflow and the outstanding loan.

As always, many thanks for your continued financial support throughout the whole year.

Gordon Wallace

CHURCH FINANCES.

As we approach the end of this year, we would remind you that to be included in the

2022 Accounts and Annual Report, **ALL** contributions to the church funds must be forwarded no later than

Sunday 8th January 2023

If you never had or you would like Freewill Offering Envelopes for 2023,

or

if you would like to subscribe to the church funds by monthly Standing Order through your own bank,

or

maybe as a Tax Payer you have not yet signed up to the Gift Aid Scheme, (the HMRC will refund to the church 20% of all your contributions at no expense to yourself thus enhancing our church bank balances.)

Please contact – Gordon Wallace / John McCleary (Treasurers) or Edith McConnell (FWO/Gift Aid Secretary).

ANNOUNCEMENTS DEATH:

It is with sadness that we record the death of Mrs Anna Toombs on 9th October. We extend our sympathy to the family circle at this time of loss.

HARVEST THANKS

A special word of thanks to John Robinson who provided a wonderful selection of flowers for our harvest service and to all members of the congregation who brought fruit, vegetables and monetary gifts.

This year we appreciated the involvement of some organisations who provided window displays and especially the BB, GB and Beginners who brought gifts for the food bank. The flowers were distributed to some elderly members of the congregation while the Simon Community in Lisburn was the grateful recipient of the fruit and vegetables.

Finally, thanks to those who came along to decorate the church and those who delivered gifts. Another great team effort.



422 will meet on **Thursday 24th November** at 2 30 pm. Our special guest will be Colin Elliott who will sing and play. Everyone will be made most welcome.

HELPING HANDS will meet on **Thursday 3rd November** at 2.30pm in No 31



BIBLE DISCOVERY

Thursdays 3rd and 17th **November** 11am-12noon. Coffee from 10.30am 'Jonah - is his story about more than a big fish?' Come and find out! Open to everyone.

TASTING & TRAINING on Wednesday 9th November - at 7:30pm.

This is for <u>every organisation</u> who will be using the coffee dock including those who have volunteered to help with the Sunday tea & coffee rota and the BB & GB Parents' Room. Training will be provided on how to use the new equipment in the coffee dock and an opportunity to taste and choose the coffee we use.

PRAYER FOCUS

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

The Link project is finished and ready to use. Many of you will have had the opportunity to visit already.

We look forward to moving to the Upper Room for our next Prayer Focus. Please join us on **Monday 21st November** from 8.00 - 9.00 pm as we thank God for his faithfulness and seek his guidance for the future.

'Let's celebrate together'
Railway Street Ladies Christmas Evening on
Monday 28th November – come at 7.30pm for a
warming glass of mulled wine. Nelson Small will
demonstrate how to make a festive table decoration (all
items supplied), followed by a special Christmas supper.
Total cost £10.



Saturday 3rd December







in the Church Halls from 10am - 1.30pm

Please keep the date free and plan to come and bring your family and friends.

There will be market stalls, breakfast and lunches, tea and coffee.

There will also be an auction and a special visit from Santa.

CAR PARK

As the work on the link is coming to an end, we will be able to use the car park again. Once again thank you for your patience with the limited access to the car park during the renovations.

The renewal notices for 2023 are being sent out with the FWO envelopes as has been previously done. This will give instructions for payment and when the forms must be returned. If you do not wish to renew your access, can you please return any fobs to the office in an envelope with your name and address on it, so it may be deleted from the system.

As explained on the form, car park fees must be received by 31st January 2023 otherwise fob will become invalid.

BIBLE READING NOTES 2023

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 20th November 2022**For further information speak to Ruth Nelson.

PRESBYTERIAN HERALD: Anyone who does not already receive the Presbyterian Herald and would like to order it for 2023, please leave your name with Angela in the Church office. Subscription £18. There is also the option to take out a digital subscription for £15 from Issuu (https://issuu.com/presbyterianireland)

CHRISTMAS STAMPS: Please keep all Christmas stamps to be donated to the Save the Children Fund (box available in the vestibule). Ideally these should be trimmed to a few centimetres all round.



Girls' Brigade

With over fifty girls in our company, the church hall is buzzing each Thursday night as the girls come together in their sections for games, scripture and badgework.



<u>Jaegar</u> Each section loved meeting Jaegar, Adam and Judith. We are so proud of Jaegar for completing this stage of training and wish him well as he meets his new owners. We also raised £100 for Guide Dogs in training.

<u>Harvest</u> We hope you saw our display of handprints and thanksgiving trees in the church on Harvest Sunday. Thank you to each girl who contributed and especially to Alex who co-ordinated the beautiful display.





<u>Lisburn Food Bank</u> Thank you girls! You were especially generous and we know that all of the items you brought will be very much appreciated by families who need our help in this way.

<u>Scripture:</u> Each section is well into their Scripture programme as we learn about what 'Our Great Big God' is like.



Thursday 3rd November: no GB due to half term **Sunday 20th November:** GB Enrolment Service at 10.30am followed by refreshments

Samaritan's Purse - Operation Christmas Child



Shoeboxes are available to collect in the porch. There are also leaflets detailing how to prepare your shoe box. You can also download the leaflet from the resources section of the church website www.railwaystreet.org You will also find a link to donate to cover the cost of the box. If you donate online, they will send you a barcode. Print this, put it inside the box, and in February they will email you to tell you where the box ended up.

The mission of Operation Christmas Child is to provide God's love in a tangible way to children in need around the world, and together with the local church worldwide, to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Operation Christmas Child began in the UK in 1990, after Dave Cooke, a local businessman in Wrexham and his wife Jill felt called to do something in response to the plight of Romanian orphans at the end of the Cold War. Dave's sister Jan, came up with the concept of the shoebox gift as a form of an easily transportable 'Christmas stocking' wrapped and packed with love. A tangible message of hope for children in the toughest of circumstances.

The Wales-based shoebox gift project became an official project of Samaritan's Purse in 1995.

Every year since, Samaritan's Purse has collected shoebox gifts filled with toys, school supplies, and hygiene items for children around the world. Since 1990, more than 178 million children in more than 150 countries have received an Operation Christmas Child shoebox. The project delivers not only the joy of what, for many kids, is their first gift ever, but also gives them a tangible expression of God's love.



Thanks to all of you who have taken shoeboxes for this year's appeal. If you didn't get the chance to collect one there is still time to use your own shoe box. You can download the instruction leaflet from the resources section of the church website www.railwaystreet.org

Please note that the shoeboxes need to be returned by <u>Sunday 6th November</u> or left into the church office by Thursday 10th November



Lisburn Foodbank **Christmas** 2022

Last year Lisburn Foodbank put together 450 Christmas hampers and over 2000kg of food went to their partner organisations to support them making their own hampers. They also distributed over 2000 pairs of pyjamas through their partner agencies and were able to issue 400 butcher vouchers for families.

With so much uncertainty this year they are unsure what the need will be but they want to be prepared either way and we know God always provides.

To assist the Foodbank in making up the estimated 500 hampers they are asking that we have all our donations in by Sunday 27th November.

Railway Street is once again being asked to supply:

- tinned fruit.
- sweet boxes
- tinned ham (triangular tins)



CHRISTMAS GIFT SERVICE - SUNDAY 4th DECEMBER

For many years families in the greater Belfast area have benefitted greatly from the generosity of many congregations across the Province that have donated gifts to the Belfast City Mission's Annual Christmas Appeal for children and teenagers in needy families. The giving of these gifts helps to alleviate the pressures many families feel at this time of year and we know that the current economic situation in our country will cause even greater hardship for many this Christmas.

As has been the practice over the past few years, we are not asking for toys - although if toys have been purchased we will take them. Instead, we have found that gift cards have been more beneficial to families.

Therefore, once again this Christmas we are seeking donations as follows:

- Gift Cards (£5, £10, £15, £20) from Toy Stores eg., Smyths, Argos etc.
- Monetary contributions (or by cheque/postal order made payable to Belfast City Mission)
- Selection Boxes
- Tins or packets of sweets

You are warmly invited to bring your gifts to the morning service on the above date and we are planning for children to be able to bring their gifts forward during the service and to place them at the Christmas tree.

The staff of the City Mission expresses sincere thanks and appreciation to you in anticipation of your help in supporting this year's Appeal for needy young people.

Update from Steven Woods



We have been in Ballynure PC since the beginning of June, when I took on my role as Student Assistant (though you'll know that Rachel was in Ballynure long before I was...). Throughout the summer I worked full-time for the church on placement, which involved a lot of visiting, preaching, leading services and generally being about the place. Our summer series was the 'one another' passages of the Bible, through which we tried to discover a bit more about what doing life together meant for the church family. It was really encouraging to think about what I had learnt from

the Railway Street family as I spoke on showing hospitality to one another, bearing with one another, loving one another, etc. As I thought about our home group in RS, as well as the different members who have shown great love and hospitality to us and others, it was easy to think of examples of application to share in Ballynure.



It has been great getting out on pastoral visits in the congregation and getting to know them more. Judah has been

overjoyed that we are now in a more rural community, where plenty of people own tractors. The church have been very welcoming to us as a family, and we have made some good friendships already.

As of September, my full-time placement in Ballynure has been reduced to a couple of sessions a week, as I have returned to full-time study in Union Theological College. This means that alongside full-time study (mostly taken by Dr. Marty Cowan, so I'm not sure who needs your prayers more, you can ask him...) each week I lead a Discipleship Explored small group in our home, do several pastoral visits, am involved in Sunday services, as well as preaching once a month and helping with Youth Fellowship. As you can imagine, when assignments are factored in, as well as family time, this amounts to a busy week, so prayer for good time-management would be appreciated.

I've still been keeping up to date with things in RS. I got a sneaky tour of the new Link a few weeks ago, and it is really exciting to see this project (which I was involved in back in the very start of the planning) being so close to completion. I also had the joy of visiting G22 during the summer, which although it was always going to be one of the things I missed leading most, it was brilliant to see it thriving after not being able to happen over the last two years. Hannah, Alan and the whole team did a fantastic job! As time goes on, I'll continue to keep up with RS and hopefully see you all from time to time!



Thank you for your continued prayers for our family.

Steven, Rachel & Judah

Judah doing the tractor pull during the Ballynure Family fun Night!



to live in safety, rather than fear.

Connecting With Culture

The Broken
Silence of
the Girls



Hadis Najafi,

a 22-year-old Iranian, joined other women and girls to brave an incredibly repressive political regime to ask for freedom and the right

She messaged her friends, 'I hope in a few years when I look back, I will be happy that everything has changed for the better.'

She was shot dead by security forces an hour later.

The protests are principally about the treatment of women, though disproportionate numbers of casualties also come from ethnic minorities.

Sadly, this story is not particularly new or unique. Tyrannical regimes have long sought to shore up their power through othering specific groups; as time goes on, this only increases in order to maintain the privileges and power of the few.

In Scripture, oppressive power is a recurring characteristic of human sin, found among the people of God and the nations around them. Three features the Bible highlights consistently also feature in the turmoil in Iran.

First, oppressed people are underestimated, such that oppressors fail to recognise their potential. In the stories of Judges, Ehud circumvents the Moabite king's guards who never suspect that the Hebrews could have the wherewithal to challenge them (3:16–23), and Sisera seeks to hide in a woman's tent, never imagining a foreign woman could be his downfall (4:21). If women in Iran are considered lesser, with less access to education, work, and experience, it's easy to underestimate the force they represent.

Second, leaders use escalating amounts of disproportionate force, highlighting the discrepancy between their immense power and the people's destitution, as with Pharaoh's oppression of Israel, and Iranian police killing teenage girls.

And finally, oppressive leaders blame others, often the oppressed themselves, as with Pharaoh, and Iran's tendency to blame 'foreign' influences.

The sweep of Scripture shows that no nation or group of people is immune from the risks of tyrannical power. And because misuse of power is endemic in humanity, it is at the heart of how God acts in Christ: through a complete undermining of human power structures, and the demonstration of a different way to be – vulnerable, self-giving, taking on himself the consequences of humanly distorted power and authority. Hope doesn't lie in overpowering the oppressor, but in a different way of holding power altogether. This is a call, not just for political leaders but for all of us, to check the kind of relationships we enable and condone in our homes, workplaces, and communities.

Isabelle Hamley

Secretary for Theology and Theological Adviser to the House of Bishops

Presbyterian Moderator, Right Reverend Dr John Kirkpatrick, has spoken of the 'absolute privilege' of being able to come alongside 'and stand in solidarity and in faith' with those supporting refugees in Hungary and Internally Displaced People in western Ukraine, on a visit to both countries this week.



Dr Kirkpatrick and is wife Joan were in central Europe this week to see the ongoing work of PCl's partner church, the Reformed Church in Hungary (RCH), as it supports Ukrainian refugees in Hungary following Russia's invasion of its neighbour in February.

Since the war began Irish Presbyterians have responded to **the humanitarian**

emergency by giving £1.3 million to the relief effort. The Moderator and Mrs Kirkpatrick saw how that support was being used though visits to various RCH agencies in Hungary. They also crossed the border into Transcarpathia, a region of western Ukraine and the city of Berehove, spending time with the leadership of the Reformed Church in Transcarpathia (RCT) and members on the ground, who continue to care for the thousands of Internally Displaced People fleeing the conflict further east.

Speaking on his return home, Dr Kirkpatrick said, "It has been an absolute privilege to be able to come alongside our brothers and sisters in Christ and stand in solidarity with them, and in faith, at this time. To experience the resilience and seeing the reality of faith in action, especially in Transcarpathia in such difficult circumstances, has been an amazing and humbling experience."



The amount raised from congregations form across Ireland has been distributed equally between PCI's relief and development partners, Christian Aid and Tearfund, and the RCH through its relief and development wing, Hungarian Reformed Church Aid. In Transcarpathia much of the everyday social care, welfare and education is provided by the Church, which has, since the Russian invasion

in February, been severely stretched having faced what Dr Kirkpatrick described as 'a double exodus'

"In Berehove, in western Ukraine where we stayed, even though it is 800 kilometres east of Kyiv, the community has witnessed a double exodus that the Church had to deal with overnight. Firstly an exodus of their own community with people being called up to fight, while others crossed the border into Hungary leaving only the elderly, young mothers and their children and fewer staff in schools and hospitals.



"While ministers and their families have stayed to help, in some cases congregations lost over a third of their members. Transcarpathia then experienced a second exodus of 500,000 people coming from the rest of Ukraine to escape the conflict, with fewer people and little resources to look after them."

Dr Kirkpatrick continued, "The reality of that is there are empty houses as you go through the villages. You are also very conscious of the distinct lack of men. The air raid sirens are a regular reminder of the war, with the children we met in the schools having to go down to their shelter. While the city wasn't under attack the sirens sounded as missiles, drones, or shells fell on other towns and cities, perhaps hundreds of kilometres away. It was a very sobering experience and created a constant sense of anxiety for the children. As one soldier told me at a checkpoint, it is a constant reminder for him that people are dying in other parts of the country."





In the midst of this is the Reformed Church in Transcarpathia. "It is incredible to think that in January the Church decided to declare 2022 as 'A Year of Thanksgiving' and they continue to give thanks as an expression of their faith, even in the face of such difficulty. Joan and I found no sense of desperation, just a realistic concern for the world around them and what I can only describe as this Gospel expression of kindness, which was so evident. On Tuesday evening they thanked us, and the support PCI has shown, by taking us out for a meal."



During their stay, the Moderator and Mrs Kirkpatrick visited congregations, educational and other social welfare institutions run by the RCT. They also had the opportunity to discuss the impact of the war, and the Church's response to it, with Bishop Sándor Zán-Fábián, the Presiding Bishop of the Reformed Church in Transcarpathia and its Lay President Béla Nagy, the Director of the RCT's Diaconal Coordination Centre in Berehove.

"During our time together we had an opportunity to talk and pray. Bishop Sándor and Mr Nagy continually reaffirmed how much they deeply appreciated the

kindness and generosity of Irish Presbyterians and wanted the Church to know how thankful they were for the support PCI had shown, which has made a massive difference. While aiding the humanitarian effort, that provision has also made a real difference in the provision of practical support for local ministry, which we saw, enabling ministers and their parishes to look after those who have not been able to leave and those who have fled the war," Dr Kirkpatrick said.

Mrs Kirkpatrick said that while the kindness and warmth of the welcome shown to those fleeing the war, especially by the women who were also so resilient, the pain etched on the faces of those who had fled was plain to see. "We met a lady and her young grandson who had travelled all the way from Donetsk in the east of the country. They had returned home and then escaped again. They couldn't speak,



the pain was literally unspeakable as they couldn't communicate. We just held each other." On a visit to the RCT's Diaconal Centre, the Moderator and Mrs Kirkpatrick met the bakers who earlier in the conflict baked 1,000 loaves a day. The bread was put in buses and sent to Kyiv and other parts of Ukraine returning with children escaping the worst of the war, to be looked after by the Church. Hundreds of loaves are still baked each day and distributed to refugees who have found shelter in the various educational and social welfare organisations run by the Church. The Diaconal Centre

also sends out weekly humanitarian shipments with in-kind donations to the interior parts of the country, with the church looking after around 5,000 people in its various institutions.



While the Moderator - who is the Minister of Portrush Presbyterian Church - and Mrs Kirkpatrick were in Transcarpathia for a day and a night, the majority of the five day visit took place in and around the Hungarian capital, Budapest. Here they visited Hungarian Reformed Church Aid headquarters and met its CEO along with the head of its Refugee Ministry,

and others, who co-ordinate the humanitarian response. They also visited the RCH's Mission Service and its theological college.

"In Ukraine and in Hungary we have been shown such kindness and hospitality, even in the midst of such suffering and human tragedy. We listened and tried to encourage, while getting a sense of how the Church has responded and continues to respond to this war," Dr Kirkpatrick said.

"We have also learnt never to underestimate the power of simply being present. Even at home, when you visit a friend in hospital, or call in on a neighbour who is having a hard time, the fact that you have made the effort can be powerful. As we stood in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Christ, we certainly found that here."

The Moderator concluded by saying, "While we saw how our Church had contributed to the humanitarian effort, we also saw how the Lord was keeping people at peace. The peace of God that the Apostle Paul writes about in Philippians, the peace that transcends understanding. Just as they were praying, we were asked to pray for a just peace, not victory, but a just peace, seen through Gospel eyes, a peace for everyone."

SUNDAYS AT RAILWAY STREET MORNING SERVICE 10.30am

BEGINNERS CHURCH - No. 31
KIDS CHURCH - MAIN HALL
YOUTH CHURCH - Brownlee Room

Service will be live streamed.

BOYS' BRIGADE - (Sept to April)
Monday - Company Section 7.30-9.00pm
Tuesday - Anchor Section 6.30-7.30pm &
Junior Section 7.00-8.15pm

GIRLS' BRIGADE (Sept to April)

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 (Sept - June)
Fourth Monday of each month
Main Hall at 8.00pm

422 (Sept - June)
4th Thursday of each month at 2.30pm

BIBLE DISCOVERY

1st & 3rd Thursday of each month at 11am