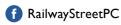
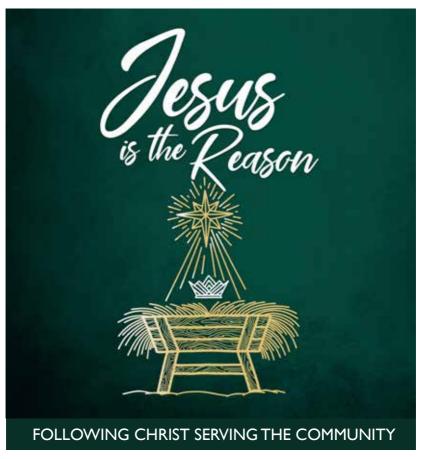


www.railwaystreet.org



December 2022 / January 2023



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Dear Friends,

Maybe it is only my perception, but society's Christmas seems somewhat subdued this year. As yet I don't see anything like the same number of Christmas lights in people's houses - no doubt in part due to the rise in the cost of electricity. Even Lisburn and Castlereagh Council is turning off their Christmas lights earlier at night this year.

A combination of rising inflation and the subsequent rise in the price of nearly everything, the political vacuum locally in the face of the severe challenges, the ever present danger of the escalation of the war in Ukraine, along with the mainstream media's habitual obsession with seeking to instill fear and anxiety at every opportunity, is without a doubt dampening people's normal festive joy at this time of year.

However, the truth is when you strip away the decorations and lights, the food and drink and the material gifts from most people's Christmases you are left with nothing of significance, nothing that can give lasting hope or joy in the dangerous and uncertain world in which we live. Hence the reminder in Railway Street's Christmas publicity this year is that 'Jesus is the Reason'. There would be no Christmas were it not for the reality that a little over two thousand years ago God sent His Son into this world and provided us with what we most needed – a Saviour. Jesus is, of course, the reason for this season. But the reality of Jesus being the reason goes far beyond simply the celebration of Christmas for, when you begin to think about it, you realise that Jesus is the reason for everything. Nothing in this life has any significance or eternal value if Jesus is not at the centre of it.

In the book of Colossians Paul writes words that remind us of this very truth – that Jesus is the reason, that Jesus is at the centre of everything, and that is exactly the way God intended it to be.

"The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross." (Colossians 1:14-20)

Jesus is the reason when it comes to creation, for in Him all things were created, or as John puts it in the wonderful prologue to his gospel. "Through him all things were made, without him nothing was made that has been made." (John 1:3)

Jesus is the reason why this creation exists, despite all the damage that sinful humanity is guilty of doing to this world, because not only did He create all things – 'in him all things hold together' - Jesus is actively sustaining this world through His almighty power.

Jesus is the reason when it comes to salvation - there is no salvation outside of Jesus. "For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross".

Jesus is the reason that as Christians we live as people of hope in a hopeless world for we know that Jesus will return in glory and power and through Him all things will be made new.

Jesus is the reason – He gives meaning, significance, hope and peace. Know Jesus know hope, no Jesus no hope.

Many years ago, the Rev James Allan Francis showed how from apparently humble beginnings Jesus is the reason for everything, when he wrote these words, 'He was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another obscure village, where He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty. Then for three years He was an itinerant preacher. He never had a family or owned a home. He never set foot inside a big city. He never travelled two hundred miles from the place He was born. He never

wrote a book, or held an office. He did none of the things that usually accompany greatness. While He was still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against Him. His friends deserted Him. He was turned over to His enemies and went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross between two thieves. While He was dying, His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had – His coat. When He was dead, He was taken down and laid in a borrowed grave. Nineteen centuries have come and gone, and today He is the central figure for much of the human race. All the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that ever sailed, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as this One Solitary Life'

So once again our challenge as those who are 'in Jesus' is to reflect the love and mercy of Jesus to others through our words and our good deeds. I want to commend you for your generous giving in recent weeks to Tear Fund and Christian Aid, to Samaritans Purse, to the Lisburn Foodbank and to the Belfast City Mission. Such generous giving in difficult times is a powerful demonstration of the love of Jesus Christ.

But that sharing of Jesus as the reason also needs to involve our words as we share the reason for the hope that we have. Here is one simple way you can do that - we have produced postcards with that message and with a personal invitation to our Christmas services where we will sing and proclaim the message that Jesus is the reason. Please take them and use them to invite family, friends and neighbours to discover for themselves that Jesus is the reason for everything.

I trust that you will all know a hope-filled Christmas and once again our prayer for you is, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." Romans 15:13

Yours in Christ, Michael Davidson



Services In December 2022

4th December

10:30am - Christmas Gift Family Service – Michael Davidson

6.30pm - 'What Paul really said about women in the Church' Part 2.

1 Timothy 2: 8-15 – Michael Davidson

11th December

10:30am – 'Christmas In Eden' – Genesis 3:15 Michael Davidson

18th December

10:30am – 'A Mighty Ruler From A Little Town' – Micah 5;1-5 - Michael Davidson 6:30pm - Carols by Candlelight Service

25th December

10:30am - Christmas Day Family Service - 'Jesus Is The Reason'



Services In January 2023

1st January

10:30am – 'Overcoming Life's Challenges' – 1Kings 18:16-40 - Stephen Johnston

8th January

10:30am - 'Called to Serve' - Electing A New Committee - Michael Davidson 6:30pm - 1 Timothy 3:1-7 'The Church's Leadership' Part 1

15th January

10:30am - Rev Brian Gibson (Minister Emeritus of Railway Street)

22nd January

10:30am - 'Going Deeper, Casting Wider' Railway Street Vision - Michael Davidson 6:30pm - 1 Timothy 3:8-16 'The Church's Leadership' Part 2 – Michael Davidson

29th January

10:30am - Gospel Shaped Outreach 1 - How Are We Doing? - Michael Davidson (COMMUNION)

Watch online at <u>www.railwaystreet.org</u> Telephone Line Service – 028 92448979

ANNOUNCEMENTS

KIRK SESSION meets on Monday 5th December at 8pm in the Upper Room.

CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEE

The meeting scheduled for **Monday 12th December** has been **CANCELLED**. The next one will be on **Monday 13th February 2023**.



FESTIVAL OF LESSONS AND CAROLS at 6.30pm Sunday 18th December

REHEARSALS: Sunday 4th December after morning service in Upper Room.

Sunday 11th December after morning service in Upper Room. Bring coffee/tea/juice with you.

Sunday 18th **December** after morning service – run through in church building **Sunday 18**th **December 5.15pm** in the church building.

CHRISTMAS YOUTH NIGHT

We had a lot of fun at the youth night last month and are looking forward to a similar evening on the **Friday 16th December**. We will have Christmas themed games and a short Bible talk, picking up on our Christmas theme that we will be following in youth church. We would love to see our young people and their friends there! Contact Hannah – hannah@railwaystreet.org

PRAYER FOCUS



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

This Christmas let us set time aside to reflect on the Christmas Story, respond to the invitation to follow Jesus and receive the gift of eternal life.

Let us also take time to join together in corporate prayer. We have two opportunities to do so as one-year ends and another begins. Please join us for **Prayer Focus** in the newly refurbished Upper Room on **Monday 19th December 2022** from 8.00-9.00pm and **Monday 16th January 2023** from 8.00-9.00pm.

BIBLE DISCOVERY

15th **December** - we will be finishing our series on Jonah. Meeting in No 31, please note that coffee is served from 10.30 but we will begin the study at 10.45am.



19th January 2023 - new series starts. Meeting in No 31 at 10.45am. Coffee from 10.30am. All members of the congregation will be very welcome



Thursday 29th December 2.30pm - Christmas at Home. My memory of an old Christmas

Thursday 26th January 2.30pm – Into 2023 - Ambitions, Hopes & Plans.



Railway Street PW Monday 23rd January 2023.

All ladies of the congregation are welcome. The theme for the evening is 'Show hospitality to One Another'. Our speaker is Shirley McGonigle from The International Meeting Point.

A date for your diary. **Friday 27**th **January 2023** 'Live Issue Concert.' The Gospel group, **Live Issue**, will be performing in Railway Street Church on **Friday 27th January** at 8.00pm. <u>All members of the congregation</u> are welcome and donations will go towards PW Mission projects as well as Live Issue outreach. See full page advertisement in this bulletin for more details.

WIDER WORLD

Now is the time to renew your subscription to the magazine. This year the cost has increased to £7 however this is still excellent value for 4 issues of a high quality publication containing informative and thought-provoking articles on the Christian faith.

Your subscription can be placed in the envelope provided in the Christmas issue which you should soon receive. Please place this on the collection plate or give it to me personally.

New subscribers are warmly welcomed. Just speak to me, Dorothy McClelland, or phone 028 92677249.

CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEE ELECTION

The current Congregational Committee has come to the end of its term and we want to thank all members for their diligence and hard work in looking after the matters that fall within their remit. We are especially grateful to these members of Committee, as they have served a 5-year term, rather than the normal 3 years, due to the Link Project.

The process for electing a new Congregational Committee of 20 members (using Option 4 set out in Paragraph 185 of the Code) will begin in December 2022 with the steps of the process set out below: -

- Display of Qualified Voters' List in Meeting House Vestibule by mid December 2022
- Confirmation and approval of Voters' List by end of December 2022
- Election to take place between 8 January 2023 and 15 January 2023
- Kirk Session meets to count votes on 16 January 2023
- Names of those proposed for election read to the congregation on 22
 January 2023 and 29 January 2023
- Congregational Meeting to approve the new Congregational Committee after morning worship on 5 February 2023
- First meeting of new Congregational Committee on 13 February 2023.

The list of Qualified Voters is currently being prepared. A qualified voter is a communicant member of our congregation who has contributed financially to the freewill offering during the last financial year or is a communicant member who has joined our congregation in 2022 and has contributed financially to the freewill offering during the current financial year.

All qualified voters are eligible for election to the Congregational Committee with the exception of members of Kirk Session. This is because members of Kirk Session are ex-officio members of the Congregational Committee. You will see members of Kirk Session's names highlighted on the Voters' List when it is published.

Voting papers will be available in January 2023 and qualified voters will be able to nominate up to 20 members for the next Congregational Committee. Completed voting papers must be signed by the qualified voter and returned by 10pm on 15 January 2023.

We ask all qualified voters to consider prayerfully whom to nominate for our next Congregational Committee and trust that God will bless them in their service for our church family.

If you have any questions in relation to this election for the Congregational Committee please speak to our Session Clerk, Stephen Johnston.

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,

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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).

CHRISTMAS STAMPS

Please keep any used stamps to donate to Save the Children, who can redeem them for extra funds. Stamps can be left at any time of year on the table in the vestibule or given to a member of Helping Hands. Thank you. (PS This applies also to any unused stamps out of date after 31st January 2023).

HELPING HANDS

Thursday 5th **January 2023**. Meeting in No 31 from 2.30pm. All interested crafters welcome for knitting, crocheting, tea, chat and good company.

HELPING HANDS - FOLLOWING CHRIST, SERVING THE COMMUNITY

Helping Hands consists of a small but vital group of ladies who meet once a month on church premises but are also very busy at home. The group was set up several years ago with the intention of producing hand-knitted or hand-crocheted garments, most of which would be donated to various charities.

To that end many of the members knit 'woolly hats', which include some neck warmers and scarves, to give to our former Railway Street member Colin Jenkins, who now works with the Seamen's Christian Friend Society in Cork. Colin is always most appreciative of these gifts which he passes on to seafarers from many nationalities. These men (and women) are often forgotten even though they do such a vital job in bringing us many of our everyday supplies. Our hats help them to know they are valued.

Closer to home, we also supply knitted blankets to some of our local Nursing Homes. Four of these Homes were recently the recipients of a bag of blankets each and were very grateful, especially as they were free of charge!

The non-knitting aspect of the group is to collect used stamps to pass on to Save The Children, who are able to receive funding by selling them to dealers.

If you are interested in joining Helping Hands, you will be made welcome on the first Thursday of the month. You don't have to knit for charity. Even if you can't knit too well, the craic and cuppa are good!

Alternatively, if you have any wool to spare and would like to donate it, we would be very glad of it. Anyone who knows of a Home which might appreciate hand-knitted items, please speak to Edith McConnell or Heather Henry.





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).

CAR PARK

The renewal notices for 2023 have been sent out with 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. Car park fees must be received by **31**st **January 2023** otherwise the fob will become invalid.

FLOWER MINISTRY

We are planning to resume our flower ministry in the New Year. If you would like to withdraw from or join the flower rota, please contact Elma Lindsay as soon as possibe. (Tel: 02892670130) Thank you.

THE LINK is now open for **BB & GB parents** – come enjoy a warm welcome, good company and free tea and coffee.

CHRISTMAS / NEW YEAR HOLIDAYS



Girls' Brigade is off Thursday 22nd, 29th and 5th January. Restarts Thursday 12th January



Boys' Brigade is off Monday 19th & Tuesday 20th December Monday 26th & Tuesday 27th December Monday 2nd & Tuesday 3rd January Restarts Monday 9th & Tuesday 10th January.

Rev Michael Davidson will be on leave from 25^{th} December to 2^{nd} January. Anyone requiring the services of a minister in an emergency please contact our Clerk of Session Stephen Johnston.

CHURCH OFFICE will close on Thursday 15th December and will reopen on Wednesday 4th January 2023



AN EVENING OF

GOSPEL MUSIC

FRIDAY

27 JANUARY 2023 'LIVE ISSUE' IS CONSIDERED BY MANY TO BE ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR COUNTRY GOSPEL GROUPS IN THE BRITISH ISLES

DONATIONS TO PW MISSION PROJECTS & LIVE ISSUE OUTREACH PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY

8PM

RAILWAY STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LISBURN (LIGHT REFRESHMENTS SERVED)

Connecting With Culture



'Read all about it, it's Black Friday!'



So, I discovered while scouring the Metro on the tube to work. Glitzy advertisements tried to sell me everything from superfast broadband and iPads to flatscreen TVs and seaside apartments.

I'd love to say I'm above this kind of crass consumerism and opportunistic marketing. Alas, already this week I've spent £50 on a massage gun and rocking calf stretcher.

Although that's still £188 less than the average British person will shell out this week, totalling some £500 million more than this time last year.

As I wander not far from work, I'm struck by the juxtaposition of pitch-black ads in shopfronts and shiny bright stars and angels swinging at the intersection of Oxford Street and Regent Street. What should I make of this as a follower of Jesus?

At one level, I can celebrate businesses offering great deals and balancing the books, getting out of the red after a tough financial year. But the prophet in me wants to recall that the term 'Black Friday' was coined in 1950s Philadelphia, capturing the ugliness of greedy hoards buying big at the start of holiday shopping, trampling one another to get to the best deals.

All that glitters isn't gold. The spectacle doesn't satisfy, and these transfixing apples may actually be poisoned. For today's shiny purchases are tomorrow's landfill, further stressing our fragile ecosystem.

And as average debt rises, with many families choosing between heating or eating this Christmas, this consumer frenzy looks as careless as throwing coins into fruit machines. No surprise that the Metro also advertised pawnshops and Christmas appeals for the Salvation Army.

Perhaps, though, we can redeem this black day. Might we point our neighbours to the real splendour of the season which our shopping barely foreshadows?

Because in two days we celebrate Advent, a journey from darkness and unmet longings into the dawning of a new day. For the true light that illumines all people entered the world (John 1:9). And the weight of Christ's glory satisfies our soul in a way even the best Black Friday deal can only dimly signpost.

So, as you purchase this day, and appreciate the sparkling stars adorning our streets, take a moment to pray for fellow shoppers. May we all be consumed by the Advent to come and trace the bright lights up to their source in 'the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ' (2 Corinthians 4:6).

Dr Dave Benson
Culture & Discipleship Director, LICC

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

Ist & 3rd Thursday of each month at 11am