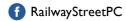
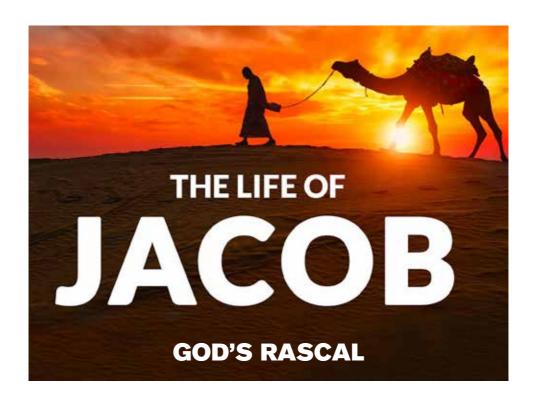


www.railwaystreet.org



February / March 2023



Minister: Rev Michael Davidson t: 02892 667010 e: mdavidson@presbyterianireland.org

Deaconess: Heidi England t: 07895 883895 e: heidi@railwaystreet.org

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'Building for the Future'

Some of the contents of this month's letter are from an article that was accidently omitted from the December bulletin.



Dear Friends,

Back on Friday 18th November the new Link and refurbished Minor Hall were officially opened at a special service of Thanksgiving and Dedication. The music and singing that evening were excellent.

The Moderator of the General Assembly Rt Rev Dr John Kirkpatrick dedicated the new building and then preached from Nehemiah 1.

In addition to members of Railway Street we were joined by many invited guests, including Stephen Lowry of Lowry Construction Limited and the site foreman Alan Rankin. There were a number of the sub contractors also in attendance along with guests from the local community, including the Lisburn city centre churches and political representatives including 4 of our MLAs and our MP Sir Jeffrey Donaldson.

It was brilliant to then see the Link and Minor Hall filled for the first time with people enjoying the great supper laid on by our catering team. Many people were in no hurry to leave and it was nearly 11:00pm before we were locking up.

The Link and Minor Hall were back in use that Sunday 20th November to accommodate the large crowd that attended our Girls' Brigade Enrolment service.

Since then the Link, Minor Hall and the new Upper Room have been in constant use as Kirk Session, Prayer Focus, Kids' Church, 422, PW, the PCI Deaconess Association,



Brownlee Primary School, BB and GB parents, and others have been enjoying the new facilities.

The overwhelming sense I get from the congregation is that everyone is extremely impressed and very satisfied with what has been achieved.

It is great to see these buildings now in regular use and we are mindful of the many opportunities they offer us as a congregation going forwards as we seek to 'Follow Christ and Serve the Community.'

There were and are many people to thank. We thank Lowry Construction Limited for a truly marvellous job with great workmanship and attention to detail. We thank the site foreman Alan Rankin who was so easy to work with and always seemed to remain calm and unfazed no matter what new challenges arose. We thank the many sub-contractors.

We are indebted to our architect Judith Hamilton who saw the potential of the space we had available and drew up the plans for the new facilities and who has been with us for every stage of the journey.

In terms of our own members, we owe a huge debt of gratitude to Ivan Woods who was the project manager from the congregation's end. I can't begin to count the number of hours Ivan has dedicated to this project as he undertook so many meetings with the contractors, architect and the various congregational sub-committees.

We thank our health and safety officer Peter Blackman who photographed the journey from the old Link to the new, regularly climbing ladders and scaffolding to get the best possible shots.

We thank Rodney Lockhart and Andy McGrath who brought their engineering experience to bear in many aspects of the project.

Above all we return praise and thanks to our God. Psalm 127 says, "Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labour in vain." I believe this project was a God given vision. We embarked on this journey with a step of faith in a time that was socially and economically challenging and we rejoice that God has directed and guided us every step of that journey.

Now we continue on the next stage of this exciting journey - the using of the Link as a resource to build up the church of Jesus Christ in Railway Street and to reach into the local community with the Good News.

Allied to this is the forthcoming publication of, "Go Deep, Go Wide" - our Strategic Mission plan for 2023-25. This will set out the spiritual priorities that

the Kirk Session has identified and that we want to concentrate on developing over the next two years. This plan will set out the practical steps and initiatives that we want to take in order to get there. This will be introduced to the congregation, God willing, on Sunday 26th February.

The next step will then be for every member of Railway Street to consider where they fit into this plan and what God is calling you to do using the gifts and abilities that He has given you. In his letter to the church in Ephesus Paul explains how the church grows. This is what he says is Christ's plan for his church and everyone who belongs to it, "So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. (Ephesians 4:11-16)

The role of the pastor and teacher is not to do or lead everything in the church. Rather their unique calling is to teach God's Word and to equip God's people to discover their work of service – to see how they can use their gifts in the service of others. As each member of the church does this the Lord builds up His church as we grow together in Christian discipleship. These are, I believe, exciting and challenging days for us in Railway Street church. As we move forward, we need everyone young and old to play their part as we seek to 'Follow Christ and Serve the Community.'

Finally, we have to face the challenge of paying back the loan that was necessary to complete the Link project. The leadership of the church is incredibly grateful for your generosity this far which has meant our level of borrowing is lower than originally anticipated. However, we have still had to borrow £600,000. The Link Gift Weekend raised over £30,000 which is an encouraging start in seeking to repay our loan. But we continue to need your ongoing monthly giving to keep up our payments until the next Gift Day in the

spring. I am hopeful that with your ongoing generous giving we will clear the remaining debt in the next few years.

Yours in His service Michael Davidson

The Kirk Session at its last meeting of 2022 addressed the issue of certain inconsistencies regarding the names of the different parts that now make up our church property. This was reviewed and the following names were agreed:

The Main Hall
The Brownlee Room
The Minor Hall
The Link
The Upper Room

For clarity we would encourage all organisational leaders and members of the congregation to use the above names for all internal and external communication.



Following Christ, Serving the Community

ELECTION OF THE NEW CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEE

The votes were verified and counted by Kirk Session on Monday 22nd July. The following 18 have been deemed elected and have indicated their willingness to serve. They are in alphabetical order:

Geoffrey Allen Margaret Artt Adam Baird Peter Blackman **Elizabeth Bridgett Bertha Cowan Gordon Crawford Janet Ferguson Elizabeth Fortin Fiona Humphries Andrew Johnston Fdith Kime Edward Lockhart Rodney Lockhart Robin Martin** John McGucken **Simon Spence** June Wightman

Their names will be read at the services on both 29th January and 5th February and the congregation will be asked to give their final approval on Sunday 12th February.

The new Congregational Committee will then meet for the first time on Monday 13th February at 8:00pm.



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 our youth organisations and who give financially to the church but who 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. They have come to faith

in Christ and have made a public declaration of their faith.

Only those who have been received as full members have voting rights in the congregation.

It may be that you have only started attending Railway Street in recent times or you may have been coming along for many years but you have not yet taken the step of becoming a full member. You might be interested in learning what this involves.

We are planning to commence Membership Classes later in February. These are open to those of all ages who would like to explore together the privileges and responsibilities of being a full member of Railway Street Presbyterian Church.

The course runs for 4 weeks and usually takes place in the Manse for an hour on a Sunday afternoon.

We look at the following topics:

- 1. A Church Member is Someone Who Believes
- 2. A Church Member is Someone Who Follows
- 3. A Church Member Is Someone Who Belongs
- 4. A Church Member is Someone Who is Committed

The only commitment you make at this point is to come along and learn what it means to be a full member. At the end of the classes you then make your own decision about whether you want to come forward for membership or not.

We invite anyone who would like to be part of these classes to speak directly to Michael Davidson or to contact him by phone or email.



Sunday Mornings: God's Rascal – The Life of Jacob Sunday Evenings: 1 Timothy – The Life of the Local Church

Services In February

5th February

10:30am - Genesis 27:1-40 - *'The Stolen Blessing'* - Michael Davidson 6:30pm - 1 Timothy 3:8-16 - *'The Church's Leadership Part 2* - Michael Davidson

12th February

10:30am - Genesis 27:41-28:9 - 'The Fall Out In The Family' - Michael Davidson

19th February

10:30am - Genesis 28:10-22 - 'Jacob's Ladder'- Charlie Hadjiev 6:30pm - 1 Timothy 4 - 'Where Bad Theology Comes From' - Michael Davidson

26th February

10:30am - Railway Street Vision - 'Go Deep, Go Wide' - Michael Davidson

Services In March

5th March

10:30am - **PW Service** — David Leach (Professor of Ministry Union Theological College)



6:30pm - 1 Timothy 5:1-16 - 'Life In the Community of Faith' - Michael Davidson

12th March

10:30am - Genesis 29:1-30 - 'The Deceiver Is Deceived' - Michael Davidson

19th March

10:30am - Genesis 29:31-30:24 'A Biblical Soap Opera' - Michael Davidson



6:30pm - Dromore Presbytery -

Mission In Ireland Rally in Maze Presbyterian

26th March

10:30am - COMMUNION - Genesis 30:25-43 -

'How To Fleece Your Father in Law!' Michael Davidson

Watch online at www.railwaystreet.org

Telephone Line Service - 028 92448979

DEATHS IN THE ELDERSHIP

Len Murray – 5th December 2022

Len Murray was a faithful member of our congregation, having joined our church family when stationed in Lisburn during his military career and then re-joining us when he settled in Lisburn after retiring from the Army. He served as a member of our Congregational Committee and then as Church Secretary before being ordained as a Ruling Elder in April 1997. In addition to the many ways he served our church family, Len also served our denomination on a considerable number of Boards, Councils and Commissions, bringing his wide range of knowledge and experience to a great variety of different situations in the wider church. Len was a great example as a servant of his Saviour and has gone home to be with the Lord Jesus on that other shore.

We extend our deepest sympathies to Jean, Paul, Kathleen and the whole family circle assuring them of our continued love and prayers.

Victor Hutchinson – 6th December 2022

Victor Hutchinson joined Railway Street when his police work brought him to our area and he very quickly settled into the life and work of our church. His care for others was always evident and was recognised when he was ordained as a Ruling Elder in September 2012. He served faithfully in many different ways within our church and in the wider community until deteriorating health resulted in him being granted the office of Elder Emeritus in 2021. Victor was held in very high regard in both church and professional life living out his faith with his characteristic graciousness and gentleness. He now rests from his labours in God's nearer presence and his works do follow him.

We extend our deepest sympathies to Moyra, David, Keith and the whole

We extend our deepest sympathies to Moyra, David, Keith and the whole family circle assuring them of our continued love and prayers.

It is also with sadness we record the following deaths: Mrs June Varena Arthur on 20th December 2022

Mr Alan James McMaster on 14th January 2023

Mr John Edwin Hurst on 18th January 2023

Mrs Rosetta (Etta) Winnington on 20th January 2023

Mr William (Billy) Braithwaite on 26th January 2023.

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

MESSAGE OF THANKS

On behalf of my family, I would like to express my deep thanks for the support the family of Railway Street afforded me in the days following the death of my husband Len. Thanks to all who visited, sent cards, called with food and provided meals and to those who assisted in any way with the Thanksgiving Service. I am deeply grateful for all your love, prayers and support at this difficult time. Jean Murray

BELFAST CITY MISSION'S CHRISTMAS GIFT APPEAL FOR CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS

It is a pleasure to report that, once again, there was an excellent response by our congregation to this annual appeal for gifts for needy young people.

The contributions received were as follows:

36 Gift Cards/Vouchers from Toy Stores

£685 in Monetary Donations

54 Selection Boxes / 17 Tins or Packets of Sweets

18 Toys and Books

On behalf of the Governing Body of the City Mission, I wish to express sincere gratitude and appreciation to those members of our congregation who contributed with generosity to this most worthy appeal.

Roger Thompson (Vice President and Treasurer)

A meeting of THE **CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEE** will take place on **Monday 13**th **February** 2023 in the Upper Room at 8pm. This will be the first meeting of the newly elected Committee. A full attendance is requested to welcome new members and to make further decisions on Committee.



March at 2.30pm in No 31. No particular skills necessary. Anyone welcome for an afternoon of knitting and/or nattering and a cup of tea.'

on Thursday 16th February, 2nd March, 16th March and 30th March.

This term's theme is 'Jesus – with Him or against Him?' All members of the congregation are welcome.





422 – Thursday 23rd February at 2.30pm in the Minor Hall – 'The Silver Screen' and **Thursday 23rd March** at 2.30pm – Ladies & Gentlemen!! All welcome to both meetings



PRAYER FOCUS

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

Prayer Focus has been meeting every month for the past 10 years. Last month we were encouraged by welcoming a much larger group than normal.

Can we do even better this month and as we move into the future? In a fallen world there is much to pray for. There is

also much to give thanks for.

Please put these dates in your diary and, if at all possible, come along to our next Prayer Focus meetings, held in the Upper Room on **Monday 20th February** and on **Monday 20th March** from 8.00-9.00pm.



Railway Street PW – Dates for your diary.

- Monday 27th February Keep in touch with One Another. Looking forward to a visit from Kate Maguire.
- Sunday 5th March PW Service. Reverend David Leach from Union College. 'Communicating God's Word effectively to those around us in the context of an ever-changing culture'. Retiring offering for PW mission funds.
- Monday 27th March Care for One Another. Grace Cahoon Grace is a Family Support Team Leader with Horizon Surestart (Barnardos), which gives support to young families in the Carrickfergus and Larne areas.

Girls' Brigade

GB Week is next Monday 6th - Saturday 11th February 2023. We appreciate all donations towards this fundraising venture in support of GB funds as the girls seek to raise money to support the running of their programme. All contributions can be gift aided.





Railway Street's **2nd Girls' Brigade Display** will take place on

Thursday 30th March @ 6.30pm, in the main church hall. More information to follow later.



Our Juniors, Seniors & Brigaders enjoyed an informative and practical evening with the Christian Charity 'Made for More', where they were able to



talk about their faith and discuss topical issues around self-esteem and well-being.

A representative from the <u>GB Youth Forum</u> came along to share with the Seniors & Brigaders about the GB Youth support materials and events specifically suited to our older girls.





The Tiny Tots and Explorers are looking forward to a trip to High Rise Indoor Soft Play arena on Thursday

9th February- lots of energy will be expended! Girls will meet at High Rise at 5.55pm- bring your permission form!

For more information about GB, contact Hilary Milligan (Captain) on 07899896879



For details on Children's Ministry Training contact Hannah: hannah@railwaystreet.org

FLOWER MINISTRY

Our stock of flower containers is running quite low - any SMALL containers eg baskets or plastic bowls would be much appreciated. They can be left in the church office or with Adeline or contact Elma Lindsay (02892670130)

CATERING TEAMS

For the past 20 years, the ladies of the congregation, under 5 teams, have been providing the catering for all the church events, excluding funerals, where refreshments were served. With the passing of the years and with many new and younger ladies now in our congregation, we are looking to refresh our teams. If you are already a member of a team, the team leader will be contacting you to see if you still wish to help, or if you feel it is now the time to step down.

If you have never helped with the catering, can we encourage you to volunteer in this area of our church's ministry. It would involve providing sandwiches, traybakes or sausage rolls on possibly one occasion a year and helping with all the practical aspects on that occasion – setting up, serving and clearing up at the end of the event. A list for names will be in the vestibule and link during the month of February.

Can we say a big "thank you" to all the ladies who have so willingly served over the past years and we hope we can welcome on board many new faces to help us continue this service, providing hospitality to our own members as well as the many visitors who join with us on special occasions.

For further information please contact Jean Murray (07729785139) or Elma Lindsay (07815317205)

CHURCH DEFIBRILLATOR.

Further to the opening of the Link, the defibrillator is now housed in the Link - wall mounted close to the entrance to the main building. If group leaders require the unit to be at their meetings, it can be taken away but must be returned afterwards to the Link.

RAILWAY STREET WORK TEAM TO ROMANIA 2023



In 2018 and 2019 teams from the Church went to carry out work at the Exodus centre in Sutor.

This year we are planning to send another Church team from the 1st to 8th May to help prepare the centre for the summer.

The cost is £375 per person and a number of

people have already expressed interest in this team. Applications need to be completed by **7th February**, with deposit of £100 paid by 14th February.

We will then work with Exodus to align their work requirements with our team skills. The format for a work team is similar to that followed by our youth teams.

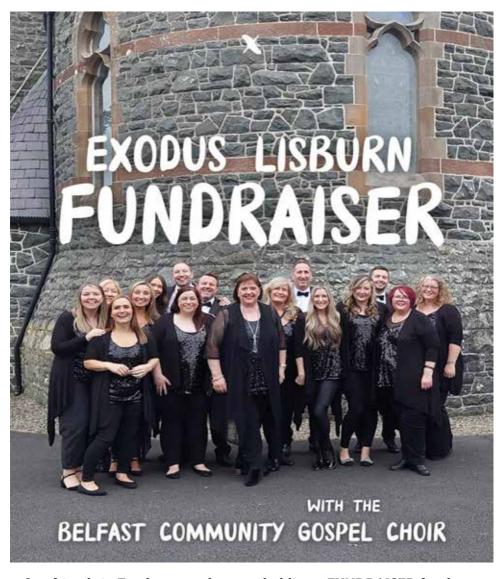
You can apply here: apply.exodusonline.org.uk

Team 60 - Railway St - Work Team - Sutor - 23



EXODUS TEAMS

This summer, we will be sending two Exodus teams of young people from our church to Romania. We will be taking young people age 15+, to serve and evangelise in a Romanian village. The placement will include running kids' clubs, practical help for the community, visiting with the elderly and working alongside the local church. The teams will meet weekly to prepare for the trip, following a 13-week programme exploring what it means to exchange a life lived our way, for a life lived God's way. The course prepares the team for their final trip and beyond, it allows young people to explore their gifts, questions and deepen their faith. Ultimately, we want our young people to have fun and know the call Jesus has on their life. We ask the church family to be praying continually for these young people over the next months.



Our friends in Exodus, next door are holding a FUNDRAISER for the work of Exodus Lisburn

Saturday 18 February at 7:00pm in Trinity Methodist Church, Lisburn

A night with Belfast Community Gospel ChoirTickets are priced £15 and can be booked via this link: https://linktr.ee/ExodusLisburn



GANAWAY 2023 IS HAPPENING 15TH-20TH JULYI

More details to follow soon.



FEBRUARY 2023





PRAYER POINTS

"In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only son into the world, so that we might live through him." 1 John 4.9



E3 ANTRIM & Lisburn

Rebekah Armstrong E3 Schools' Worker

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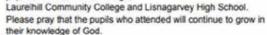


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PRAISE GOD

- Praise God for our the GSUS Live lessons which took place in Antrim Grammar School and Parkhall Integrated College. This programme allowed 366 pupils to hear the biblical perspective on the themes of fear, forgiveness and rejection.
- Give thanks for our inter-schools SU weekend where we gathered pupils from Forthill Int. College.







PRAYER REQUESTS

- BROOKFIELD SCHOOL This month Anita (SEN co-ordinator) and I will be teaching RE lessons in Brookfield School focussing on Old Testament Bible characters. As we share about their faith in God, pray that the pupils would understand what they hear.
- FORTHILL INTEGRATED COLLEGE From Feb 20th, we will be starting a series of lessons with the YR8 pupils focussing on the Bible (What is the bible? Who is in the Bible? How can I trust the Bible?). Please pray for opportunities to have good conversations with the pupils about these topics.
- ASSEMBLIES Please pray for the assemblies coming up this month, that pupils would understand God's power as they hear about the Israelites crossing the River Jordan.

3rd - McKinney PS 24th - Parkview School

10th - Killowen PS 27th - Knockmore PS

21st - Ballinderry PS

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Connecting With Culture

To Strike or not to Strike?

That is *not* a simple question!

Every day

brings news of further strikes. Think transport, NHS, Royal Mail, schools, and the civil service. Everyone's impacted. And opinions run hot.



It's tempting to support who you feel most sympathy for. Yet if a dispute reaches a point where workers walk out, both sides have fallen short.

Preaching on Colossians 3:22–4:1 in 1973 – a time of equal unrest – John Stott set out a biblical framework for industrial relations based on employees and employers having reciprocal duties. Employees have a duty to provide good, honest, productive work, and employers to provide them with just wages and fair conditions. One party is not providing charity to the other but fulfilling their responsibilities. Both parties should concentrate on their own duties and not simply their own rights, remembering that everyone's equal under God's authority.

These are solid principles to stand up for. But looking at current disputes, we could conclude that both sides are equally right and equally wrong. So, as someone who once worked for a trade union, and is now an employer, I've found two questions helpful in shaping my attitude to each dispute:

1. Do these actions facilitate or impede our call to work 'as working for the Lord' in the long term as well as the short term?

Often workers' short-term gains come at a greater cost to the sustainability of work, the organisation we work for, and even our country's livability with future generations in mind. Equally, a 'harsh' settlement for workers unjustly

leads them into long-term need. We seek sustainably good work with just recompense.

2. How does my action demonstrate a love for my neighbour above love for self?

One of the goals of our work must be to sustain and develop God's creation, expressing God's command to love our neighbour. How will or won't my decision demonstrate this imperative?

There are of course many more good questions to interrogate the motivations, aspirations, and outcomes of each side amidst industrial disputes. But these are a good starting point for your 'water cooler' conversations, as you help colleagues make sense of why you did or didn't strike, as a follower of Jesus in your workplace.

Lasting, redemptive resolutions – where each side releases their own claims and seeks the welfare of others – may seem a distant miracle, but let's pray for peacemakers and trust in a God who can soften hardened hearts.

Ross Hendry
Chief Executive of CARE

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