

December 2024 - February 2025

May the God of
HOPE fill you WITH all
JOY & PEACE

ROMANS 15 : 13

THE
bulletin


cpc.org.uk

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Fallible leaders – but an infallible God!

Against all the odds Donald Trump is back and looks likely to be inaugurated as the 47th president of the United States on 20th January 2025. This is either the saving of America and the Western World or the end of civilisation as we know it - depending on your political perspective! I am just glad that I was not an American citizen who faced the unenviable position of having to choose between Donald Trump and Kamala Harris.



Politicians make big promises before they get elected and inevitably fail to keep them afterwards. Donald has been elected on the promise to 'Make America Great Again,' and if you listened to his victory speech you will have heard him promise that everything wrong in America will be fixed and everyone will enjoy prosperity as the United States enters a new golden age under his leadership.

How will that look in four years time when President Trump comes to the end of his second term? While he may be successful in some things the reality is that he will have failed to keep many of his promises.

As Christians we don't make the mistake of putting our faith in politicians because we know that always leads to disappointment. The Psalmist says, "Do not put your trust in princes, in human beings, who cannot save. When their spirit departs, they return to the ground; on that very day their plans come to nothing." (Psalm 146:3-4)

Rather as believers in a sovereign God we are to be those, “whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD their God.” (Psalm 146:5)

While human leaders will always fail and disappoint us our belief in a sovereign God reminds us that God can use even Donald Trump to accomplish His divine purposes. Don't get me wrong - personally I think Trump has a number of significant character flaws. But amazingly God can still work through such people to achieve His purposes. History teaches us He has done it before.

In the sixth century BC the Jews found themselves in exile in Babylon under the rule of an egotistical, immoral and narcissist ruler called Nebuchadnezzar. He made a statue of gold (quite possibly in his own image) ninety feet high and nine feet wide to set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon and commanded everyone to bow down and worship it. Three young Jewish exiles serving in the king's palace refused and were thrown into the fiery furnace. God protected and preserved Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and humbled Nebuchadnezzar who said, “Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God.” (Daniel 3:28) God caused these young men and their fellow exile Daniel to continue to prosper and rise in power even while living in exile.

The prophet Jeremiah had said that the exile in Babylon would last 70 years and then God would see to it that his people could return home. How did this happen? Again it was as a result of God working through another pagan ruler. In 2 Chronicles 36 we read, “In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfil the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah, the LORD moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm

and also to put it in writing: “This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: “‘The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Any of his people among you may go up, and may the LORD their God be with them.’”

The sovereign God again worked through an unbelieving ruler to fulfil His promises and accomplish His purposes.

We see it again in the Christmas story. As we have seen in our studies in the Old Testament book of Micah, God said that the promised Saviour, the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.” (Micah 5:2)

The problem was that the young woman Mary, who was carrying the promised child, lived in Nazareth far to the north of Bethlehem. How could Micah’s prophecy be fulfilled?

God again worked through an unbelieving ruler to accomplish his purposes,



“In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world... And everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth

in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was

expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son.” (Luke 2:1-7)

We do not put our trust in princes, in mortal men who cannot save. Instead we worship the sovereign God who can still work through these rulers to accomplish His purposes. We worship the God who provided the divine Saviour we needed.

It was an unlikely Saviour to be sure - one who did not possess the appearance and trappings of worldly power but

one who was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. But this unlikely child would grow to be the Saviour we needed and in God's sovereign purposes, “at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.” (Romans 5:6)

As we approach another Christmas in what appears to be a chaotic and out of control world we celebrate the fact that we have sovereign God who is in control. He works all things and He can work through all people to achieve His purposes.

So let us join together to worship that God and to praise and proclaim the one true Saviour He sent - Christ the Lord. And may we enter 2025 not as others, with fear and foreboding, but with faith in a sovereign God and confident in Christ our Saviour.

Yours in His service,
Michael Davidson

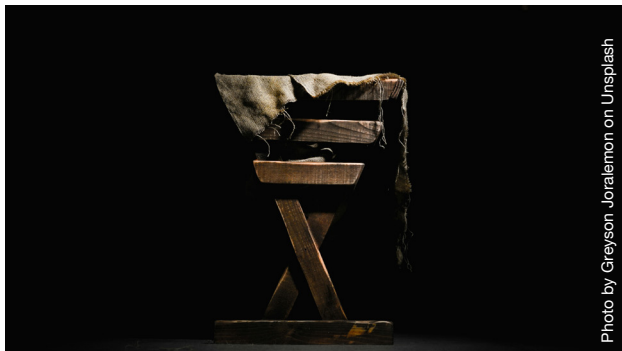


Photo by Greyson Joralemon on Unsplash

SERVICES IN DECEMBER

Revelation 1-4 'What does Christ think of the Church?'

1st December

10:30am Christmas Gift Family Service - Ryan Higgins
(Assistant in Maze Presbyterian)

6:30pm 'Prayer & Praise' led by Senior Youth

8th December

10:30am Revelation 3:1-6 'Sardis: The Zombie Church' -
Philipp Jaeschke (Ministry Applicant)

6:30pm Micah 6:9-16 God's Call to the City - Michael Davidson

15th December

10:30am Revelation 3:1-13 'Philadelphia: The Faithful Church' -
Michael Davidson

6:30pm Alternative Carol Service led by Alan Wall & Praise Band

22nd December

10:30am Revelation 3:14-22 'Laodicea: The Lukewarm Church' -
Charlie Hadjiev

6:30pm Lessons & Carols by Candlelight Speaker - Michael Davidson

25th December

10:30am Christmas Day Family Service - Michael Davidson

29th December

10:30am Luke 2:22-40 'Waiting For God's Timing' - Stephen Johnston

6:30pm No Evening Service

SERVICES IN JANUARY

Romans - a letter that makes sense of life

5th January

- 10:30am Revelation 4 'How Worship Should Be Done'
- Michael Davidson
- 6:30pm No Evening Service

12th January

- 10:30am Romans 8:28-39 'What Will Separate Us?'
- Nathan Donnell (Ministry Student)
- 6:30pm Micah 7:1-7 'It's Enough to Make You Cry'
- Michael Davidson

19th January

- 10:30am Romans 9 'Israel's Fall' - Michael Davidson
- 6:30pm 'Christian Influence In A Secular Society'
- Callum Webster (The Christian Institute)

26th January

- 10:30am Romans 10 'Israel's Fault' - Michael Davidson
COMMUNION
- 6:30pm Luke 13:22-30 The Narrow Door – Peter Todd
(Accredited Preacher Trainee)



Watch online at www.railwaystreet.org Telephone Line Service 028 9244 8979

SERVICES IN FEBRUARY

Romans - a letter that makes sense of life

2nd February

10:30am All Age Family Service

6:30pm Micah 7:8-13 'Praying & Waiting' - Michael Davidson

9th February

10:30am John 1:19-42 'Look the Lamb of God.'
- Peter Huey (Ministry Student)

6:30pm Micah 7:14-20 'O Come Let Us Adore Him'
- Michael Davidson

16th February

10:30am Romans 11:1-32 'Israel's Future' - Michael Davidson

6:30pm 'Prayer & Praise' led by Alan Wall

23rd February

10:30am Romans 11:33-36 'From Theology To Doxology'
- Peter Todd

6:30pm COMMUNION Preacher: Michael Davidson



Watch online at
www.railwaystreet.org



Telephone Line Service
028 9244 8979

Baptism

George Archie Francis - 6th October 2024

Son of Michael and Megan Francis

Bereavements

It is with sadness that we record the deaths of:

Anne Scott died 9th October 2024

Cyril Marshall Irwin died 27th October 2024

The congregation extends their heartfelt sympathy and prayers to both their families at this time of loss.

Prayer Focus

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

As another year draws to a close and a new year approaches we have yet another opportunity to join together in prayer to our Heavenly Father.

Help us to reflect on the year which is coming to an end and to pray for peace, forgiveness, restoration and renewal as we enter 2025.

Monday 16th December

Monday 20th January &

Monday 17th February

from 8.00-9.00pm

in The Link

PW meetings 2025

Monday January 27th at 8pm

Entrusted to safeguard

Detective Constable Heather Flanigan (C1 Organised Crime Branch) *Please bring Mission Boxes*

Monday February 24th at 8pm

Entrusted to bring hope

Volunteers from Prison Fellowship Neil Jackson and Leslie Addis
The Prison Fellowship NI is this year's PW Home Project

Sunday March 2nd PW Service

Rev. David Cupples is speaking on the PW Theme 'Entrusted'

Used stamps for RNIB

Please keep any Christmas stamps you receive (not necessarily Christmas design) and place them in the box on the vestibule table or give them to Heather Henry or Edith McConnell. They are much appreciated by RNIB who can redeem them to make extra funds for their charity.

Bible reading notes 2025



If you wish to renew, cancel or start taking Bible Notes please let Ruth Nelson know.

A variety of notes are available including:

Daily Bread and **Encounter with God**

Bible Discovery

Bible Discovery meets on alternate **Thursday mornings** at 10.45am in the Minor Hall and is open to anyone in the congregation. Tea and coffee are available from 10.30am.

We will finish our study of The Exodus on 5th December

A new topic will begin on 16 January 2025, meeting after that on 6 February and 20 February.



Handel's 'Messiah' performed by the Ulster Orchestra, soloists and the Belfast Philharmonic Choir on Saturday, 14th December 2024 at 7.30pm in The Waterfront, Belfast

'Messiah' tells the story of salvation from the Old to the New Testaments. Part one focusses on Biblical prophecies of the Saviour's birth; parts two and three tells us of Jesus's birth, life, death, resurrection and second coming. 'Messiah' reminds us all of the true meaning of Christmas — the birth of Jesus Christ.

The music and biblical text of Handel's 'Messiah' conveys the experiences of joy, grief and pain from the sublime beauty of 'Comfort Ye', the resounding 'Hallelujah' chorus to its final triumphant chorus 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain' followed by the 'Amen' chorus. 'Messiah' reminds us that God can and does make all things new and invites us to accept His offer of salvation.

If you have never experienced this timeless choral piece live, now is the time to remedy this.

You can book your ticket(s) for this concert either by ringing the Ulster Hall/Waterfront Box office, Tel: 028 9033 4455, Monday – Friday between 12noon to 6pm or go online at:
<https://www.ulsterhall.co.uk/what-s-on/>



THE LINK UP

WEDNESDAYS, 10AM - 12PM

Link Up every Wednesday morning 10am - 12 noon.
Drop in to the coffee dock for tea/coffee, biscuits and a chat.
Come on your own or with a friend. Everyone is warmly welcome.

Belfast City Mission Christmas Gift Service - Sunday 1st December

Once again this Christmas we are seeking donations as follows:

- Gift Cards (£5, £10, £15, £20) from Toy Stores eg. Smyths, Amazon, Argos etc.
- Monetary contributions (cash or cheques made payable to Belfast City Mission)
- Selection boxes
- Tins or packets of sweets.



Dates for your diary

Girls' Brigade

7th December 10am-2pm

GB/BB Christmas Market in our halls. Morning coffee and lunches, craft stalls, auction, Santa and kids' activities. Something for everyone!



GB Christmas Party Night – Thursday 12th December

GB Christmas Holidays – 19th December - 2nd January inclusive

GB resumes – Thursday 9th January 2025

GB Display – Thursday 10th April 2025

Boys' Brigade

BB Christmas Holidays – 23rd December - 7th January inclusive

BB resumes – Monday 13th January for Company Section & Tuesday 14th January for Anchor Boys & Juniors

INSPIRE (formerly Wider World)

Now is the time to renew your subscription to the magazine. However, this year it has increased to £10. This is still excellent value for 4 issues of this high-quality publication containing informative and thought-provoking articles on the Christian faith. Your subscription can be placed in the envelope attached to this year's Christmas issue.

Please place this on the collection plate, or give to me personally. New subscribers are warmly welcomed. Just speak to me, Dorothy McClelland, or phone 028 9267 7249.

POP UP CHRISTMAS MARKET

SATURDAY 7TH DECEMBER 2024

at
RAILWAY STREET
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

10AM TO 2PM

STALLS * FOOD
KIDS ACTIVITIES * TREATS
SANTA * AUCTION



MUSIC FOR CHRISTMAS

Friday 13 December 2024
7.30pm in the Minor Hall

Una Voce Choir

with Judith Watson (Conductor)
Hayley Howe (Violinist)
Audrey Gillian (Accompanist)

Followed by Christmas refreshments
in the Link

Everyone Welcome

Donations for the Lisburn Foodbank



Save the Date - 422

28 November: "Work and Play"

Hannah Craig, Youth Worker in Railway Street

Friday 13 December: "Music for Christmas"

7.30pm in the Minor Hall

2 January: "In for Tea"

Tea/coffee and scones in the Link

23 January: "Better Recycling"

Joanne Templeton from Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council

27 February: "Ministry to the Deaf"

Canon Will Murphy

All meetings are held at 2.30 pm in the Minor Hall and followed by refreshments in the Link.



LICC comments on Justin Welby's resignation



Justin Welby's resignation points to a gospel of justice | LICC

On Tuesday, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, resigned.

licc.org.uk

On Tuesday 12 November, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, resigned.

Following on from an 11,000-signature strong petition, his resignation came after the release of a report damning the decades-long abuses by Christian leader, John Smyth QC. While the abuse was before he was archbishop, Justin knew of the cover-up, failed to seek justice and protect victims, and thus accepted his personal and institutional responsibility.

To read the full article visit: <https://licc.org.uk/resources/can-we-fix-the-foundations-at-the-frontline-of-our-faith/>

Session and Committee Matters

The Dromore Presbytery agreed at its November meeting to Billy Bittle's request to demit the office of Ruling Elder in our congregation and become an Elder Emeritus. We wish to thank Billy for his 32 years of faithful service as a Ruling Elder in Railway Street and wish him God's blessing in all he continues to do for our church family.

It was agreed by Kirk Session at its meeting on 11 November to co-opt Andrew McGrath and Mrs Rebecca Woods as full members of the current Congregational Committee for the remainder of its term. Andy and Rebecca were both very involved in the Link Redevelopment Project and we are delighted that they have agreed to serve our church family in this way.

Presbyterian Herald

Would any member of our congregation who would like to begin subscribing to the Presbyterian Herald in 2025 please speak to our Session Clerk, Stephen Johnston, before 8th December to arrange this. Any existing subscriber who wishes to cancel their subscription should also speak to our Session Clerk by the same date. Details of the subscription due for 2025 and how it will be collected will be shared with subscribers in due course.

Communion Dates 2025

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper will be observed on these dates in 2025.

26 January – morning	23 February – evening
30 March – morning	18 April – Good Friday evening
25 May – morning	29 June – evening
28 September – morning	26 October – evening
30 November – morning	

The Lord's table is not just for communicant members of Railway Street – it is open to all who know and love the Lord Jesus as their Saviour.

Finance update

Significant one-off receipts in the first half of the year have returned our main account to a credit balance position, along with a marginal increase in FWO this year so far. The end of the church year normally shows increased giving to the FWO which will help towards an on-going breakeven position, although costs are still creeping upwards with salaries and payments to PCI up by inflation and energy costs remaining at higher levels than a few years ago. The finalised position will be presented to the Church Committee in February as normal.



Of course, we cannot rely on ad hoc offerings, and it is essential that on-going regular giving is maintained and regularly reviewed - I noted at the last Committee meeting that if 200 families gave just an extra £40 per year (roughly the price of a cup of coffee each month!), then this would generate £10,000 pa with Gift Aid and would create an annual surplus, easing pressures on the main bank account.

We are, of course, aware of the number of asks on members wallets especially at this time of year and continue to be grateful for the generosity to the various appeals.

Congregational giving for Harvest totalled £3,335 this year and United Appeal continues to exceed our annual Target. At the time of writing, £11,185 has already been raised and should easily pass the £12,345 target set for the 2024 year.

Finally, repayments to the Link Loan Account continue to be met from regular giving and the bi-annual gift days in May and November.

For those who wish to contribute directly to our Bank account(s), the Bank details are as follows and payments to the No1 account should be marked FWO or UA as appropriate:

Railway Street Presbyterian Church No.1 Account (for FWO/UA)
Sort code 95-03-61 Account No 9102 6178

Railway Street Presbyterian Church No.6 Account (for Property/Link)
Sort code 95-03-61 Account No 6104 2858

Many Thanks
Gordon Wallace, Treasurer

End of Year Accounts

As we approach the end of the year, we would remind you that in order to be included in the 2024 Accounts and Annual Report, ALL contributions to the church funds must be forwarded no later than **Sunday 5th January 2025**

If you haven't previously had or you would like Freewill Offering Envelopes for 2025; or if you would like to subscribe to the church funds by monthly Standing Order through your own bank; or as a tax payer, you have not yet signed up to the Gift Aid Scheme, (HMRC will refund to the church 25% of all your contributions at **no cost to yourself**), please contact our Treasurer, Gordon Wallace, who will help arrange this.

Treasurers of all organisations within the church should arrange to have finalised 2024 accounts with Gordon Wallace or John McCleary by 31 January 2025.

Possible RSPC Work Team to Sutor, Romania

Are you interested in being part of a Church work team next year? Railway Street have previously sent 3 different teams to carry out work in the Exodus centre in Sutor. Everyone who has been involved has found this to be a great experience.

It hasn't been possible to sustain sending a team every year, but we are now reviewing if there are enough people interested to consider a team for 2025.

If you are interested or would like to find out more details about this opportunity then please speak to Ivan Woods.



What's happening?

SUNDAYS AT RAILWAY STREET

MORNING SERVICE 10.30am

BEGINNERS CHURCH - No. 31

KIDS CHURCH - Upper Room

YOUTH CHURCH - Minor Hall

Service will be live streamed

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BOYS' BRIGADE (Sept to April)

Monday - Company Section 7.30pm-9.00pm

Tuesday - Anchor Boy Section 6.30pm-7.30pm &
Junior Section 7.15pm-8.30pm

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GIRLS' BRIGADE (Sept to April)

Thursdays

Tiny Tots & Explorers - 6.00pm-7.00pm

Juniors, Seniors & Brigaders - 7.30pm-9.00pm

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PRAYER FOCUS

3rd Monday of each month 8.00pm-9.00pm

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PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN (Sept - June)

4th Monday of each month

Main Hall at 8.00pm

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422 (Sept - June)

4th Thursday of each month at 2.30pm

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BIBLE DISCOVERY (Sept - April)

1st & 3rd Thursday of each month at 10.45am