

Church News Ireland

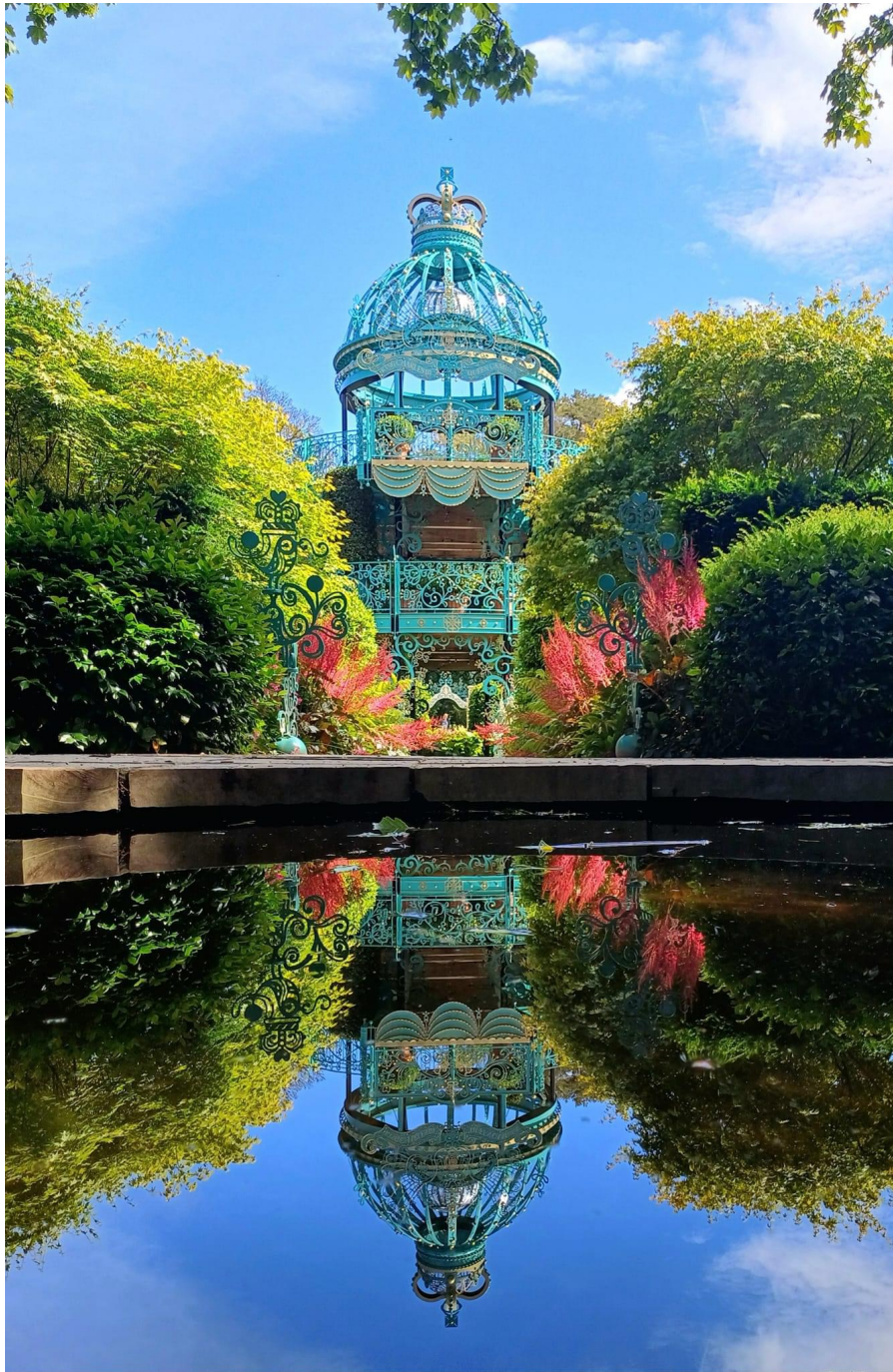


Image of the day – Coronation garden

Image of the day



Coronation garden

The monarch's passion inspired the transformation of a bowling green on the shores of Belfast Lough.

In the garden many of the species are native, peat-free and grown locally to reflect the King's interests in ecology and the environment.

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Award-winning garden designer Diarmuid Gavin designed the space.

Visitors to the garden are greeted by the wildflower meadow as they come in. Then, they can climb to a planted pavilion for a different perspective on the garden.

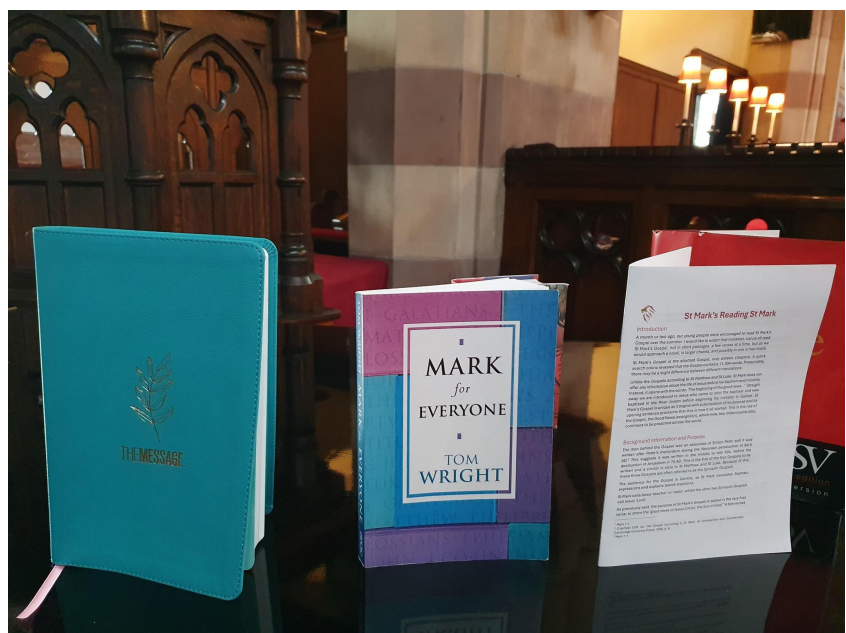
Every 15 minutes it quite literally comes to life, with music playing, trees twirling and a two-metre diameter mirror ball spinning.

It is a far cry from how the space used to be with pear and fig trees in the coronation garden. Photos courtesy David Trainor

News

St Mark's challenge to St Mark's

From St Mark's, Dundela - "We have a new challenge this summer: St Mark's reading the Gospel of St Mark."



"It's the shortest of the Gospels and starts straight in with Jesus' baptism (no mention of his birth or early life). Pick up your introduction booklet at church. Over the summer the

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rector will be gathering all our reflections and insights into a short booklet which will be available for all”.

St Marks reading St Mark



Diocesan Summer Camp at Gurteen Agricultural College

The Junior Diocesan Summer Camp was another huge success for children's ministry a correspondent from Cashel, Ferns and Ossory diocese reports -



“Scotland looking close today. We could see the Isle of Arran behind Kintyre and The Paps of Jura behind Rathlin from the North Antrim coast.”

Photo by Anne Kelly

Gurteen Agricultural College in Co. Tipperary was our venue again in 2024. The Junior Camp caters for diocesan children from 3rd class to 6th class.

The camp is organised by the Bishop’s Youth Advisory Committee headed up by our DYO (Diocesan Youth Officer) Rev Ger James, and assisted by our CFM Rep (Children & Families Ministry) Carolyn Good. Canon Nicola Halford was the Camp Chaplain.

Day one saw the children settle in their rooms, start with a swimming session followed by a visit to the Gurteen farm and dairy. There was a big tea in the canteen with plenty of food. No one could be hungry in Gurteen! After tea the children had their welcome meeting and then played dodge



Fairhead, Ballycastle, County Antrim

Photo by Anne Kelly

ball, icebreaker games and more swimming. The day ended with worship led by Canon Nicola before bedtime at 10.

Day two started early with a huge breakfast. The children were divided into eight teams and the All Stars Competition started in between rain showers. After lunch the tournaments kicked off in badminton, tennis, swimming and pool. There were four arts & crafts to choose from, making candles, tie dye t-shirts, friendship bracelets and bookmarks. After tea Canon Nicola led worship looking at who our neighbours are? The day finished with a party and fun party games before bed for very tired children.

On Sunday morning we started a little later (they were tired!) and after another huge breakfast the children had their last swim, tidied their rooms (the boys did the best job tidying) and gathered their crafts. Just before lunch was the prize giving, a lovely way to end the camp acknowledging all the

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fantastic activities and the fun had over three days. Among the many sports and tournament prizes was the special Spirit of Camp prize. The leaders picked two children who embodied the spirit. Given that this year's theme was "Love thy neighbour" it was appropriate to pick two children who were spotted helping others, volunteering and being thoughtful. Well done to Sophie and Russell, winners for 2024!

We want to thank the leaders because without them camp couldn't happen, Nicola, Ger, Emma, Lorna, Carolyn, Victoria, Denis, Shane, Cian, Libby, Darragh and Evie gave their time, energy and enthusiasm to make camp fun for all!

Irish Methodist encouraged by the Methodist Church in Albania

Barry Sloan recently visited the Methodist Church in Albania (UMC Albania), and was encouraged by the faithful young leaders of the church. He writes -

A few months ago, the congregation [in Tirana, capital of Albania] was asked by their landlord to vacate the premises they were renting for church and ministry work. This placed an extra and significant burden on them, as it is very difficult to find suitable, affordable accommodation that has access to local transport in Tirana. Shortly before my visit, the congregation found suitable premises to rent - situated right next to the local prison! The new space they have is perfect for their worship services, their ministry with disadvantaged children (Early Learning Centre) and their new connections to the prison community.



Sorry to report that Brian Boru X the Regimental Mascot of the Royal Irish Regiment, affectionately known as Conrí, died on Saturday 6 July 2024. Conrí has been the Regimental Mascot since May 2016. 🍀

[I was](invited to hold a Bible study with the youth group in Tirana. Here, and in conversations with the national leadership (Wilfried and Jean Nausner) during my visit, it is very obvious how well the young UMC in Albania has invested in young leaders. I was very impressed with the

theological breadth and spiritual depth of the young leaders in the Albanian church.

There are 4 pastors in the UMC Albania, pastoring 5 churches. It is especially encouraging for me to be able to report that all of them were supported by the World Mission Fund [a fund which Irish Methodists contribute to, via World Mission Partnership](#) at some stage in their journey. All of them were NMAs. All of them are now in leadership positions of the UMC in Albania. The wise leadership of Superintendent minister Wilfried Nausner and his UMC Mission Partner wife, Jean Nausner, has been decisive in the positive development of the young UMC in Albania. The new bishop, with oversight of the region, Stefan Züricher, has also recently visited Albania and is committed to further supporting the work and mission there.

Photos at -

[\[https://irishmethodist.org/world-mission-news/young-leaders-in-albania\]](https://irishmethodist.org/world-mission-news/young-leaders-in-albania)

C of E Synod takes first steps to allowing gay priests to marry

The Church of England has taken its first steps towards allowing gay members of the clergy to marry.

The General Synod, the Church's legislative body, voted to pass proposals that pave the way towards a report on the question of same-sex civil marriage ceremonies between members of the clergy or one member of the clergy and a lay person. Church leaders will now reconvene in February

to discuss the prospect, as well as steps to permit blessings for same-sex couples in so-called “standalone” services, which closely resemble marriage ceremonies.

These would build on proposals agreed in November, when the Synod voted in favour of permitting blessings for same-sex couples during regular church services on a trial basis.

The proposals passed comfortably by 22 votes to 12 in the House of Bishops and by 99 votes to 88 among the Clergy respectively. Among the laity, the vote was much closer, passing by just four votes, with 95 in favour and 91 against.

The proposals were met with widespread dismay among conservative-leaning groups in the Church.

Rev Canon John Dunnnett, the national director of the Church of England Evangelical Council, said: “I was born in the Church of England. But if the ‘Prayers of Love and Faith’ bus continues in the same direction, I sometimes wonder whether I will die as a member of the Church of England or not.”

The Rev Will Pearson-Gee, a Buckinghamshire rector, said: “I think it could be a watershed moment.

“They’ve woken up a sleeping giant. Up until now we’ve just been disinterested, but people have been radicalised.”

Before today’s vote, the Most Rev Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury, called for unity between factions.

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“The reality of the church as we live it is always messy,” he told Church leaders gathered in York.

“That the church flourishes as one is indispensable to the gospel in this land.

“That the Church flourishes as one is essential to the Anglican community, which like all global churches, is deeply divided and seeking the support of each other.”

Al Ahli Anglican Hospital forced to close – Archbishops call for immediate ceasefire in Gaza

Archbishop Hosam Naoum and Archbishop Michael Jackson condemn hospital closure.

The Diocese of Jerusalem has reported on Monday (July 8) that Al Ahli Arab Hospital in Gaza City has been forced to close.

In a statement the diocese which is partnered with Dublin and Glendalough diocese said that in the midst of escalating military activity in the Old Gaza City area of the Gaza Strip “we are sorry to report that the Al Ahli Arab Anglican Hospital has been compelled to close by the Israel army”.

The statement says that Hospital Director Suheila Tarazi reported that on Sunday July 7 between 6 pm and 7 pm, a large amount of firing from drones occurred in the immediate vicinity of the hospital. This was immediately followed by an IDF announcement that the area had been

declared a Red Zone and everyone should immediately evacuate all the buildings including everyone in the hospital.

The diocese said that as a result, all vulnerable people sheltering in the hospital grounds, the staff and all patients had to leave the safety of the grounds of the hospital. Inevitably, this placed the injured and the sick in great jeopardy.

“To our great dismay, our hospital is now out of operation at a time when its services are in very significant demand, and where injured and sick people have few other options for places to receive urgent medical care,” the statement says. “We are also deeply distressed that today one of our ambulances was fired at en route to the hospital. We currently have no information about the condition of our driver and any patients who were being transported for treatment.”

Archbishop Hosam Naoum, Anglican Archbishop of the Diocese of Jerusalem, said: “We protest the closure of our hospital in the strongest possible terms. In a time of warfare and great suffering it is essential that emergency healthcare services are maintained to treat the injured and the dying. We appeal to the Israeli forces to permit us to continue our sacred ministry of medical care and healing. We plead for an end to the targeting of civilians and all vulnerable people and demand all parties agree to an immediate ceasefire.’

Archbishop Michael Jackson has echoed Archbishop Naoum’s call.

“Throughout the conflict that has raged in Gaza for more days and months than any of us ever imagined, Al Ahli has been a beacon of care and a light of hope. The courage and commitment shown by staff to serving those in need has been unsurpassed and unimaginable and beyond any sense of putting themselves first,” he stated.

He added: “For the diocese and the Archbishop to have to report to the world that the actions of those involved in this war have now prevented the hospital from doing its work is an indictment of the conflict itself. Like Archbishop Hosam, I pray for and with all in need – as I encourage you also to do so – and like him I call for a ceasefire and an ending of hostilities with immediate effect”.

Cathedral Calls



Chapel Royal cheerio to choristers

“We said a "cheerio" to some choristers last night, and to our senior organ scholar. although they will always be part of the Chapel Royal.

“A wonderful cake, one of two, provided by our parents. The design shows the chapel floor”.

Clergy



Bishop's 18th and 36th anniversaries

Bishop Michael Burrows presided and preached at the mid week Holyo Communion on St John's, Ashe Street, on Wednesday the 3rd of July, The Feast of St Thomas.

It was a personal celebration for the bishop as it marked the 18th anniversary of his consecration as a Bishop and the 36th as a priest. Tralee and Dingle group of parishes.

New General Secretary of Lutheran Churches in the UK

The Council of Lutheran Churches in the UK has announced that Rev Meelis Süld will become its next General Secretary.

Rev Meelis has been a member of CLC's staff in his role as Outreach Manager for the last four years and is well known in the Lutheran, ecumenical



and Christian journalistic community in the UK and beyond. He is also a pastor in the Lutheran Church in Great Britain, currently serving at St Anne's Lutheran Church in London.

CLC's new chairman, Mr. Per Jonsson, notes the importance of having an ordained General Secretary, as Per is lay, and of maintaining a good balance between lay and clergy people in leadership. Commenting on Rev Meelis's journalistic background as broadcaster and religious editor, he noted: "We have to make ourselves known to the wider audience and tell them what we stand for and why we exist. Meelis's background will be very helpful in that."

Rev Meelis shared his excitement taking up the role of General Secretary. He says that his dream is for CLC to be known in UK society through a charitable initiative or a project that serves the whole Christian community or country: “I would like to see what our member churches would like to offer to the wider society. I think it is important that Lutherans are visible and known for their contribution to the public.”

You can hear more from Rev Meelis and Per in CLCs next podcast episode where they reflect on their respective new roles in CLC. Photo by Olev Mihkelmaa.



**Webinars, music,
resources, broadcasts,
and books**

**Visit the Cross of
Clogher at the new
Monaghan County
Museum**

**Monaghan County Museum
has a new home at the state-
of-the-art Peace Campus in
Monaghan Town following a
full year's closure, which**

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involved the painstaking logging, categorising and relocation of over 50,000 artefacts accumulated over the Museum's 50-year history.

It is very well laid out and well worth a visit. The Cross of Clogher is one of their top attractions.

Monaghan County Museum, The Peace Campus,
Monaghan, H18 RP20

[\[https://monaghan.ie/museum/\]](https://monaghan.ie/museum/)(<https://monaghan.ie/museum/>)

Open church - Bangor Abbey



Bangor Abbey will be open each Wednesday, Thursday & Friday during the summer months from 2.00 - 4.00 pm.

“Our volunteers will be happy to show you around or if you wish to simply come in and sit quietly for a few moments you are welcome to do so”.

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Scouts Ni seek New Regional Lead Volunteer Opportunities

“Are you passionate about youth development and community engagement? We have an exciting opportunity for you!

“We are looking for enthusiastic and dedicated individuals to become Regional Lead Volunteers for the North and West of Northern Ireland”.

How to Apply:

Find more information and submit your application here:

<https://shorturl.at/7DieQ>

Application Deadline: 9:00 am on Monday 22 July, 2024

For questions or further details, please email Stephen Donaldson, Chief Volunteer at chiefvolunteer@scoutsni.org

In the media

News Letter - PSNI cautions ex- Irish Baptist President for preaching in Coleraine abortion buffer zone

Police say they cautioned a man preaching in an abortion buffer zone in Coleraine – with a former Irish

Baptist President saying it was him, Philip Bradfield writes.

Pastor Clive Johston from Strabane says he was preaching in the abortion buffer zone at Causeway Hospital on Sunday but says he did not mention abortion.

A retired baptist pastor of 40 years, he has engaged in open air preaching in many countries and believes the zones are the “thin end of the wedge in restricting freedom of speech”.

He is a member of Abolish Abortion NI, which has been systematically protesting at the buffer zones across Northern Ireland since they came into force in September.

Eight buffer zones of 100-250m came into effect around entrances to health trusts, to protect patients from protests.

It is now a criminal offence for people to be “impeded, recorded, influenced or to be caused harassment, alarm or distress” within the areas, punishable by a fine of up to £500.

The PSNI said it was notified in advance of Sunday’s protest. “The planned event took place within the Safe Access Zone established as a result of the Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) Act (Northern Ireland) 2023 at the front entrance to the Hospital,” they said.

“Officers engaged with those present, explained the legislation and encouraged compliance with the Safe Access Zone before taking steps to ensure its enforcement.

“No arrests were made. One man was cautioned for breaching the established Safe Access Zone under the Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) Act (Northern Ireland) 2023 legislation. “

Pastor Johnston said a PSNI Inspector and other officers liaised with senior officers by radio for 30 minutes before acting. “And he then said to me, ‘I take it, Reverend Johnson, that you’re not going to move’. And I said, ‘No, inspector, I’m not’.

“And he said, ‘Well, you know, I believe that there is sufficient evidence here to say that this is a reckless intrusion’.

“He then read me my rights, that I had the right to remain silent and that anything I said could be used against me in a court of law. He then assured me he was not going to lay hands on me, but said I could either move or I would be taken to the station for interview.

“Then he said that he would be sending my file to the PPS.”

The pastor then left the area. “I took all that to mean I had been placed under arrest,” he said.

A police spokeswoman said they are investigating a number of alleged offences and that enquiries are ongoing.

East Londonderry DUP MP Gregory Campbell said his party voted against the “totalitarian legislation” which he said removes the right to argue a ‘reasonable excuse’ defence”.

“No individual should ever be intimidated or harassed under any circumstances,” he said.

“The right of free speech is very important. This was an infringement of flawed legislation which places pressure on police resources when there were already adequate ‘harassment’ laws in place. I will be writing to the police to ascertain the full nature of this episode.”

The buffer zones were spearheaded by the Green Party in 2022. Belfast Greens Councillor Áine Groogan commented that no arrest was made in Coleraine and that she hoped the News Letter coverage would reflect that.

“The Green Party are delighted that our Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) legislation is fully operational and being enforced to protect women and pregnant people in accessing legally available healthcare services in Northern Ireland,” she added.

Courtesy New Letter 8th July 2024 at 5:16

Poem for today

On Seeing the Elgin Marbles

by John Keats

My spirit is too weak—mortality
Weighs heavily on me like unwilling sleep,
And each imagined pinnacle and steep
Of godlike hardship tells me I must die
Like a sick eagle looking at the sky.
Yet 'tis a gentle luxury to weep
That I have not the cloudy winds to keep



Fresh for the opening of the morning's eye.
Such dim-conceived glories of the brain
Bring round the heart an undescribable feud;
So do these wonders a most dizzy pain,
That mingles Grecian grandeur with the rude
Wasting of old time—with a billowy main—
A sun—a shadow of a magnitude.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

The publication of Church News Ireland is overseen by Very Rev Dr Houston McKelvey OBE, QVRM, TD. He may be contacted at houstonmckelvey@mac.com

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