

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Walks of Witness

April 21, 2025

Image for today - Walks of Witness Lisburn, Kildare, Kenmare, Antrim

News -

10th Dublin Company at Zipit Forest adventure

Education -

Inst annual concert

Belfast High School Abaana Uganda Trip Day 5

Cathedral Calls -

New event Christus: A Passion Symphony at St Canice's Cathedral

VE Day anniversary

Clergy and ministry -

New Canons for Armagh announced on Easter Day

Rector of the Parish of Annalong

Events -

M.E Support's 12 Days of M.E. Awareness - Zoom Event

In the media -

600+ crimes at NI churches in three years

Nicklaus advise to McIlroy

Over 60 parishioners to be commissioned as Catholic Church lay leaders

Sudans siege

Israeli air strike destroys part of last fully functional hospital in Gaza City

Speaking to the soul -

Short reading and a prayer daily on this site

Image of the day



Walks of Witness

Despite a very wet Good Friday inter-denominational walks of witness were to the fore in most population centres throughout Ireland.

The two photos (Front and above) above are of the Good Friday Walk of Witness which took place in the afternoon in **Lisburn** City Centre. The rain didn't deter the large crowd taking part.

The Cross started its journey in St. Patrick's Catholic Church and was joined by all other denominations in Bow Street where the procession made its way through the centre of the city to First Lisburn Presbyterian Church.



April 21, 2025

The gratitude of
having a roof
over one's head
The churches of
Kildare marked
Good Friday with
the ecumenical
Way of the
Cross between
their three
churches; St.
Brigid's Parish,



Kildare Town, Saint
Brigid's Cathedral,
Kildare and Carmelite
Church Kildare.



Bishop Michael Burrows (right) of Tuam and Limerick walked daily through Lent from one church to another. Here he is with some of the parishioners who came to his last departure point to wish him Godspeed.

Bishop Michael made a stop at St Flannan's on his **Good Friday Pilgrimage** from Killala Group of Parishes to Kenmare.

ANTRIM CHURCHES 19th ANNUAL WALK OF WITNESS

We are looking forward to our eighteenth Walk of Witness on Good Friday 18 April. We are delighted that we will be joined by the Mayor of Antrim Neil Kelly. We are encouraged to meet at High Street at **11.00am** and we will be bussed to Antrim Methodist Church where the first service begins at **11.30am**. We will then walk down the Greystone Road into the town, to Antrim Fellowship Church in Lough Road, St Comgall's and then on to High Street Presbyterian for our concluding service at **1.30pm**. We hope to see you join us in this very powerful affirmation of our unity in the Christian faith.



News

10th Dublin Company at Zipit Forest adventure

Castleknock and Mullhuddard Boys' Brigade had a great day out to ZIPIT Forest Adventures recently.

April 21, 2025



Some of the boys overcame their fear of heights as they navigated the high levels ropes courses! The long zip lines were a particular highlight. Looking forward to the next Adventure.

April 21, 2025

Education



April 21, 2025



Inst annual concert

The annual RBAI concert as is customary evoked a full house of parents, friends and Old Instonians.



For one night only, the RBAI Choir and Orchestra returned to the Waterfront Hall on Friday 11 April 2025.

The Concert provided a very special opportunity to celebrate the talent of the boys and to recognise the contribution of **Mr Philip Bolton MBE**, to the musical life of RBAI.



April 21, 2025

The school Principal, Ms Janet Williamson commented - The Waterfront Hall offers an unparalleled concert environment and we enjoyed the breadth and range of performances at The Bicentenary Concert in 2010. With contributions from Inchmarlo and the RBAI Jazz Band, alongside the full Choir and Orchestra, we were assured of a dynamic and broad ranging concert, with a few surprises along the way.

Belfast High School Abaana Uganda Trip Day 5

We woke up and had breakfast at 8.00am which consisted of a selection of cereals, toast and scrambled egg.

We then began our short bus journey to Lweza Primary School where we were welcomed by the pupils and teachers through their school anthem and traditional African dance performed by the school choir. We then had the opportunity to speak to some of the children and divided into groups for holiday bible club and painting. The holiday bible club was centred around the story of Zacchaeus, followed by praise, teaching the children a memory verse, crafts and finally some games. A number of team members also began the painting project, funded by our £5,000 donation which had also enabled the walls to be plastered in advance of our visit. Lunch was kindly prepared for us by members of the Abaana team. The afternoon session consisted of a holiday bible club for the older pupils and more painting. Once the day was over we said our goodbyes and told the children not to be sad as we would see them tomorrow!

Leah and Hope

Cathedral Calls

New event Christus: A Passion Symphony at St Canice's Cathedral

A new event on 5th May - Christus: A Passion Symphony for Solo Organ by Francis Pott.

This monumental work occupied Francis Pott from 1986 until 1990 and lasts for just over two hours. Christus has been justly recognised as an 'Everest' of the organ repertoire and has been performed by only eight organists from among the world's virtuoso elite: (in chronological order of their respective first performances) Iain Simcock, Jeremy Filsell, David Goode, Robert Quinney, David Leigh, Kevin Bowyer, Tristan Russcher, Christian Wilson and Tom Winpenny.

On May 5th 2025, David Leigh brings this virtuosic masterpiece to Kilkenny for those looking for a transformative listening experience worthy of the Cathedral's 1853 Bevington/Crowe Organ.

Find out more here: <https://www.stcanicescathedral.ie/event/christus-a-passion-symphony-for-solo-organ-by-francis-pott/>

VE Day anniversary

The 80th anniversary of VE Day is to be marked over four days in May, including a service of "celebration and remembrance" at Westminster Abbey, the Government announced.



The Chaplains memorial at the National Arboretum

VE Day was the public holiday that marked the formal end of the Second World War in Europe. Short services of thanksgiving were held every hour in the Abbey from 9.00

a.m. to 10.00 p.m. attended by a total of 25,000 people. A service was also held the following Sunday, 13 May, when the standards of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa were laid on the High Altar to symbolise the loyalty of the whole Empire during the war.

The Dean of Westminster, the Very Revd Dr David Hoyle, said : “A service will take place at Westminster Abbey that will be both an act of shared remembrance and a celebration of a nation stepping from deadly struggle into

peace. It is a moment to give thanks, to honour a generation that showed extraordinary courage and resilience and to recommit ourselves to the courage and resilience necessary to sustain peace.”

The service, attendance at which will be by invitation only, is part of a national programme of celebrations and remembrance. Beginning on the May Day Bank Holiday, in Whitehall, a military procession is to proceed to Buckingham Palace, followed by a flypast of “current and historic” military aircraft, including the Red Arrows.

The Cenotaph is to be dressed in Union flags for the duration of the four days “to provide a focal point” for the commemorations; a “place to pay silent tribute” to those who died during the Second World War.

Street parties are encouraged, supported by the community initiatives Together Coalition, and the Big Lunch, which were also involved in the Jubilee and Coronation celebrations.

An installation of ceramic poppies is to return to the Tower of London, including nearly 30,000 from the original display in 2014, which commemorated the centenary of the First World War. It is to resemble a “wound” at the heart of the Tower to “mark and reflect the sacrifices made”.

On the Tuesday, historic landmarks, including churches and cathedrals, will be floodlit. On the evening of 7 May 1945, a newsflash announced that the following day would be Victory in Europe Day. To mark this moment, on the Wednesday, the Parliament Choir are to host a concert in Westminster Hall.

The programme is to conclude with a concert “in a celebratory tone” on Horseguards Parade, attended by more than 10,000 members of the public. “The concert will feature stars of stage and screen and military musicians and tell the story of victory and the legacy of the Second World War in Europe.”

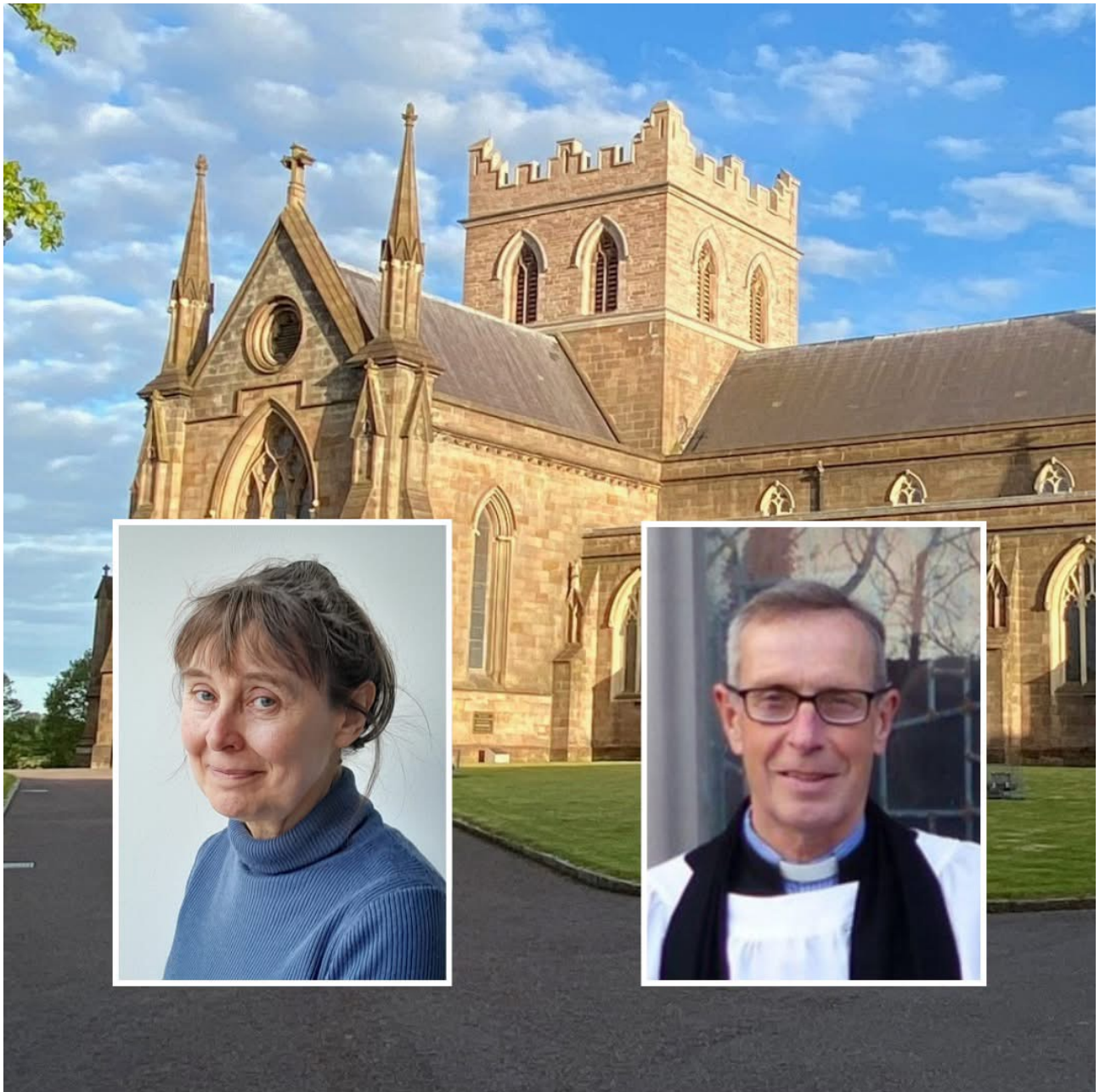
To mark the 80th anniversary of the end of the war in the Far East, a service is to be held at the National Memorial Arboretum on the Friday, in partnership with the Royal British Legion.

Among the other initiatives planned is “Letters to Loved Ones”, in partnership with Imperial War Museums, to encourage the public to find letters sent by their relatives during the Second World War. “It is hoped that this will bring together first-hand testimonies from soldiers on the front line, and the women and children on the home front. Letters to Loved Ones will culminate in an event in May, bringing together school children and their families from across the UK.”

Clergy and ministry

New Canons for Armagh announced on Easter Day

It was announced yesterday morning, Easter Day, that the Archbishop of Armagh, the Most Reverend John McDowell, has appointed two new Canons for Armagh.



Mrs Janet Maxwell, Head of Synod Services and Communications, has been appointed as a Lay Canon in recognition of her significant contribution and distinguished service to the Church of Ireland over many years at various levels. Armagh Cathedral has six Lay Canons – the first were appointed in 1997 and Mrs Maxwell will be the fourteenth to take up office. Mrs Maxwell succeeds to the stall formerly occupied by the late Canon Wilfred Young, O.B.E.

The Reverend Colin Darling, Rector of the Parochial Group of Ballymore and Clare, has been appointed Prebendary of Tynan in the Chapter of St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh. The new Canon is also the Diocesan Director of Ordinands.

Welcoming the appointments, the Dean of Armagh, the Very Revd Shane Forster, said: 'I have known Janet for many years, and I am therefore well aware of the huge contribution she has made to the central workings and administration of the Church of Ireland over several decades. Janet tends to work in the background to ensure the smooth running of General Synod, so I am delighted that her distinguished service and dedication to the Church of Ireland is being recognised in this prominent and special way.

The new Prebendary of Tynan succeeded me as Rector of Ballymore and since coming to the diocese Colin has immersed himself in Parish life. He has also made a significant contribution to the diocese in his role as Director of Ordinands. Through his work with those sensing a call to ordained ministry, he has offered great encouragement to a new generation of clergy. I look forward to welcoming both new Canons in their respective roles to the Hill of Armagh and to their future engagement in the life of the Cathedral."

In response to her appointment as a Lay Canon, Mrs Maxwell said, "I was very surprised and humbled by the Archbishop's invitation to serve as an Honorary Lay Canon of St Patrick's Cathedral and it will be a privilege and a genuine pleasure to have a closer connection with the Cathedral, which I have found to be a place of peace and

April 21, 2025

renewal over the years. For a long time, I have been an admirer of the Cathedral for its outreach and the breadth of its embrace to the community, as a place of State welcome and as a host to so many gatherings of the wider Church.”

The Revd Colin Darling said, “It is truly an honour to have been appointed Prebendary of Tynan in the Chapter of St Patrick’s Cathedral in Armagh, and I would like to sincerely thank the Archbishop for appointing me to this position.”

A service of installation will take place after the summer.

Rector of the Parish of Annalong

The Revd Bryan Martin who has been appointed Incumbent of the Parish of Annalong in the Diocese of Down.

Bryan has been serving the parish as Interim Minister-in-charge and was appointed Rector and Incumbent by a Board of Nomination on Thursday 17 April 2025. Kilhorne Parish Church

Events

M.E Support’s 12 Days of M.E. Awareness - Special Zoom Event

As part of M.E. Support's 12 Days of M.E. Awareness, we are excited to announce a series of 12 events between May 1st - 12th!

April 21, 2025

A special highlight of our event series will be a Zoom meeting with Dr. Charles Shepherd, Honorary Medical Adviser to the ME Association. Dr. Shepherd will be discussing the latest developments in the world of M.E., ME/CFS, Post-Viral Fatigue Syndromes, and Long Covid.

He will also be answering questions from attendees.

Dr. Shepherd has been a valued friend of M.E. Support for over a decade and is widely recognized as an expert and advocate for the M.E. community.

To register for the event, please click the link below or email us at:

<https://forms.office.com/e/DwdgCeAu4N>

info@mesupportni.com

In the media

600+ crimes at NI churches in three years - Belfast Telegraph

'Easy targets': 600-plus crimes at NI churches inside a three-year period. Theft and vandalism are the most common offences, Kurtis Reid reports.

More than 600 crimes have been recorded at churches and their properties across Northern Ireland since the start of 2022, according to new figures.

The data was released by the PSNI following a Freedom of Information request by the Countryside Alliance and shows that a total of 605 crimes were reported at church locations between January 2022 and November 2024.

These included incidents of theft, vandalism, assault, and harassment.

The breakdown reveals 243 cases of burglary, robbery, or theft; 257 incidents of criminal damage; and 105 offences involving violence or harassment. Among the thefts recorded, five cases specifically involved lead being stolen from the roofs of church buildings — three in 2022 and two in 2023. No such incidents were recorded in the first 11 months of 2024.

The vandalism-related offences — grouped under 'criminal damage' — ranged from arson and damage to buildings or vehicles, to other forms of property destruction.

There were 111 incidents in 2022, 81 in 2023, and 65 up to November 2024.

Violence against individuals at church properties also formed a concerning part of the figures. There were 20 incidents of violence with injury, 54 cases of violence without injury, and 31 incidents of harassment.

The Countryside Alliance, which submitted the Fol request, said the figures were “particularly saddening” as they indicate Northern Ireland is one of the worst affected areas in the UK.

“These figures bring into stark relief the devastating fact that many churches and places of worship are being treated as

easy targets by criminals,” said Mo Metcalf-Fisher, director of external affairs at the Countryside Alliance.

“These are supposed to be places of refuge and tranquillity, where people go to worship or seek solace — but all too often they are being subjected to heinous crimes, in or on their property.

“It is particularly saddening to see that Northern Ireland is the one of the worst-affected areas in the entire country.

“We cannot allow these precious places, which are often the centre of villages and towns across the country, to go unguarded and be so exposed,” she added.

“Easy access to protective funding schemes is of the greatest importance, but it is just as vital that members of the public keep an ever-watchful eye on churches and report suspicious behaviour to police.

“It is also our hope that there will be further progress on the development of a new aggravated offense relating to the loss or damage of heritage assets, a move some parliamentarians have already supported.

“Irrespective of faith or none, churches are more than just community buildings, they are often part of our centuries-old history and heritage. They must be protected.” According to the Countryside Alliance, in December last year, a burglar stole £6,000 worth of items from Buckna Presbyterian Church in Co Antrim, while just a few months before, a priest was found guilty of stealing £10,000 from his own church, St Colman's Parish Church in Dunmurry.

April 21, 2025

In 2023, the Church of the Sacred Heart in Cloughoge was targeted by vandals who smashed several windows, causing thousands of pounds worth of damage. The church had only recently been refurbished.

And in 2019, both Sacred Heart Church in Ballyclare and St Mary's Church in Limavady were vandalised and desecrated with paint.

Nationally, 179 lead thefts were recorded along with 3,937 thefts, 3,237 incidents of vandalism and criminal damage — including arson — and 1,974 incidents of violence, including sexual assault and assault on an officer.

Some 228 other crimes were recorded, including drug trafficking and crimes against society.

Nicklaus advise to McIlroy



Jack Nicklaus advised Masters champion Rory McIlroy on a sensible game plan, which McIlroy largely followed despite some risky plays.

McIlroy joined an elite group of golfers by completing the modern grand slam with his Masters victory.

Jack Nicklaus helped Masters champion Rory McIlroy overcome his demons at Augusta National by urging him to stick to a sensible game plan. There were hiccups along the way, but in the end a mostly common-sense approach worked.

The Golden Bear just wishes Ohio State had done the same against Michigan.

“Don’t do dumb things.”

That was Nicklaus’ message to McIlroy when the 85-year-old Bear met with the 35-year-old from Northern Ireland days before the Masters to discuss how best to navigate Augusta National.

A similar thought ran through Jack’s head as he yelled at the TV — “I’m a fan, man,” he said shrugging — while watching the Buckeyes spit the bit against the Wolverines Nov. 30 at Ohio Stadium.

Over 60 parishioners to be commissioned as Catholic Church lay leaders

This will take place at a ceremony in Co Mayo marking Easter Holy Week

April 21, 2025

[\[https://www.rte.ie/news/regional/2025/0415/1507678-religion-lay-leaders/\]](https://www.rte.ie/news/regional/2025/0415/1507678-religion-lay-leaders/)

Sudans siege

In depth report by BBC

[\[https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c1755j8788go\]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c1755j8788go)

Israeli air strike destroys part of last fully functional hospital in Gaza City

BBC

[\[https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cjr7l123zy5o\]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cjr7l123zy5o)

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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April 21, 2025

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**Link in Monday through Saturday from
early morning**

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