

Church News Ireland



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Image of the day



Methody on ice

Well done to Methodist College, Belfast students Bonnie Bashford, 5W, and Bailey Bashford, 4R, who are back from Michigan after being selected for the Ireland National 'Saints' U17 team.

They played in the Green Ice Tournament in Kalamazoo, Michigan against high standard American hockey players.

The Saints were welcomed as guests of honour by the Kalamazoo K Wings and took to the ice in front of 6,000 fans to welcome the team for their National Anthem.



Handel's Messiah and Gareth Malone in BBC's programming for Holy Week and Easter

Live worship, Handel's Messiah, and a reflection on women of the Passion feature in the BBC's programming for Holy Week and Easter, announced recently.

On **Easter Day**, morning worship will be broadcast live from St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol, on BBC1, and from **Canterbury Cathedral** on Radio 4. The Bishop of Dover, the Rt Revd Rose Hudson-Wilkin, will preach.

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Llandaff Cathedral is to be the venue in which the choirmaster **Gareth Malone** will conduct a performance of **Handel's Messiah** by the BBC National Orchestra and Chorus of Wales. A new series, Gareth Malone's Messiah, will follow preparation for the fund-raising concert in support of BBC Children in Need.

Three special **episodes of Songs of Praise** are scheduled on BBC1: Canon Kate Bottley presenting a reflection on women of the Easter story; Aled Jones presenting hymns for Easter Day from St George's RC Cathedral, Southwark; and a celebration of gospel music introduced by Mark De-Lisser.

Also on BBC1, **Urbi et Orbi** is to be broadcast live from Rome.

Lent Talks on Radio 4 will explore the Nicene Creed, in the year of the 1700th anniversary of the First Council of Nicaea.

On **Palm Sunday, Radio 3** will have a series of broadcasts from across Europe: Bach's St John Passion from Helsinki; the Liturgy of Palm Sunday from Vatican City State's Sala Assunta, marking the 500th anniversary of Palestrina; and Arvo Pärt's Passio in Brno, in the Czech Republic, followed by compline from St Bartholomew the Great, Smithfield. On Good Friday, there will be a broadcast of Bach's St Matthew Passion, in a recent recording by the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, with soloists, under Sir Simon Rattle.

On **Radio 2, on Good Friday**, Canon Bottley will host a reflective two-hour programme about hope after loss, "with

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beautiful music and inspiring guests". She will also present a special Easter Day edition of Good Morning Sunday.

Tim Pemberton, BBC Radio's Head of Religion and Ethics, said: "At this special time of year, BBC Radio seeks to bring people together to reflect on their faith, to hear some amazing stories and to experience the uplifting power of extraordinary music."

Other programming includes a new series of Pilgrimage on BBC2, in which seven personalities of differing faiths and beliefs make a 300km journey from Innsbruck on the Jakobsweg, the Austrian Camino, to Lake Zurich, in Switzerland.

Daisy Scalchi, BBC Television's Head of Commissioning, Religion and Ethics, said: "This is the fifth annual Faith and Hope season and once again I'm incredibly excited by the range of programmes we have on offer this Spring. Whether audiences are religious or not, there is content here that will move, inspire and delight."

Westminster: Police raid Quaker Meeting House

Police broke into a Quaker Meeting House in London on Thursday night (27 March 2025) and arrested six young people holding a meeting over concerns for the climate and Gaza.

In the following statement, the Quakers say: "We strongly condemn the violation of our place of worship which is a

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direct result of stricter protest laws removing virtually all routes to challenge the status quo.

"Just before 7.15pm more than 20 uniformed police, some carrying tasers, forced their way into Westminster Meeting House.

"They broke open the front door without warning or ringing the bell first, searching the whole building and arresting six women attending the meeting in a hired room.

"The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 and the Public Order Act 2023 have criminalised many forms of protest and allow police to halt actions deemed too disruptive.

Meanwhile, changes in judicial procedures limit protestors' ability to defend their actions in court. All this means that there are fewer and fewer ways to speak truth to power.

"Quakers support the right to nonviolent public protest, acting themselves from a deep moral imperative to stand up against injustice and for our planet.

"Many have taken nonviolent direct action over the centuries from the abolition of slavery to women's suffrage and prison reform."

Paul Parker, recording clerk for Quakers in Britain, said:
"No-one has been arrested in a Quaker meeting house in living memory.

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"This aggressive violation of our place of worship and the forceful removal of young people holding a protest group meeting clearly shows what happens when a society criminalises protest. Freedom of speech, assembly, and fair trials are an essential part of free public debate which underpins democracy."



Clogher MU member's centenary, Vonnie Elliott celebrated her 100th birthday on Saturday 29th March. She has been a member of Devenish & Boho Mothers' Union for 73 years. Vonnie had a visit from Irene Boyd,

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Indoor Members Rep and Heather Ellis , Diocesan President.

Small Grants Scheme assists St Augustine's Priory, Drogheda

Anna Byrne DC, one of the Catholic representatives on the Eco Congregation Ireland committee visited this project and sent this update: St Augustine's Priory, Shop Street is an example of what can be achieved with imagination in an inner-city church with limited outdoor space. Every spot is used to effect.

It is a work in progress which was started some years ago with the help of an architect who surveyed the area and suggested possible ecological projects. Money from 'the small grant scheme' was supplemented with donations in kind from local garden centres and businesses.

To-day there is a mini park-like area beside the church where locals can come to pray, remember their loved ones, bring their newspaper/coffee or lunch and sit in comfort for a while. Given the south facing aspect one could sit for a while – even in February.

Each area is discretely cut off to allow for privacy. Fruit trees and shrubbery plus a mini herb garden, where visitors can select something to take home to flavour their dinner, give a rural feel. Swift boxes were installed when the roof of the church was renovated. Local people are proud of it and anti-social behaviour is quickly reported. View all the photos here <https://tinyurl.com/24zwkrfc>

Inspired by Presbyterian Church mission work in Ireland at Maze event

With ten of this year's Presbyterian Church in Ireland's (PCI) 'Mission in Ireland Evenings' completed – and three to go - there is still time to get a flavour of the inspiring missional outreach that is taking place across the Church and throughout the island of Ireland.

Encouraged by the numbers attending so far – with several meetings attracting in excess of 300 people - Mission in Ireland Council Secretary, Rick Hill, explained the thinking behind the annual events.

“With talks from a host of home mission ministers, church planters, chaplains, deaconesses, mission workers and our new mission pioneers, they are wonderful opportunities to hear about their ongoing work as they tell the story of what God is doing through the Church, while sharing the message of Jesus today,” Mr Hill said.

At the meeting in Maze Presbyterian on Sunday last, which was organised by the Presbytery of Dromore, Rev Dr Keith McCrory, minister of Maynooth Community Church and his colleague Tom Gillian, who is also from the congregation, talked about their journey from the church's foundation in the early 2000s to the opening their first purpose build church in the town last August.

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New bishop for Mar Thoma Church welcomed in Adare

The mid-west community of the Mar Thoma (Indian) Church uses St. Nicholas' Adare for their monthly worship.

On Monday 17th March they welcomed their new bishop The Rt. Rev. PD Dr. Joseph Mar Ivanios Episcopa for a special Mass.

By special invitation Bishop Michael Burrows and Canon Kevin O'Brien joined the Service and refreshments. Photo shows both bishops, Canon Kevin and the officials of the Mar Thoma congregation following the Service.

The Future is Upon Us: What Now?

Registration is open for 11th Annual Symposium on Religion and International Affairs

The World Council of Churches (WCC), in collaboration with UN agencies and interfaith partners, invites global faith-based actors, civil society leaders, policymakers, and international affairs experts to register for the 11th Annual Symposium on the Role of Religion and Faith-Based Organizations in International Affairs, to be held on hybrid mode in New York City on 3 April.

Themed “The Future is Upon Us: What Now? Amplifying the Role of Faith and Civil Society Actors in Multilateral Solutions,” this year’s symposium will focus on aspects of the UN Pact for the Future, adopted in September 2024. It will explore the critical role of faith-based organizations and civil society in shaping global solutions at a time of increasing challenges to multilateralism.

“For over a decade WCC has been collaborating with UN, ecumenical and interfaith partners in organizing this symposium,” said Peter Prove, director of the WCC Commission of the Churches on International Affairs and co-moderator of the event. “This year, we will explore how faith-based actors can actively contribute to shaping global solutions through multilateral engagement, at a time when the multilateral system is under unprecedented strain.”

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The symposium will feature high-level discussions on global governance, sustainable development, peacebuilding, gender justice, and emerging challenges such as artificial intelligence.

With faith communities often working at the grassroots level, their inclusion in global decision-making is essential for achieving sustainable peace and development.

This symposium is co-sponsored by the World Council of Churches, ACT Alliance, General Board of Church and Society of The United Methodist Church, Islamic Relief USA, Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Soka Gakkai International, and United Religions Initiative, in partnership with the UN Interagency Task Force on Religion and Sustainable Development.

<https://www.oikoumene.org/news/symposium-on-religion-and-international-affairs-will-focus-on-role-of-faith-and-civil-society-in-multilateral-solutions>

<https://oikoumene.org/programme-activity/euno>

Education

Belfast High School's History tour of Dublin

Year 14 History pupils

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thoroughly enjoyed their trip to Dublin, starting at Glasnevin Cemetery for an insightful tour related to their A Level Partition course.

They finished with a tour of the significant landmarks of the Easter Rising and Irish Civil War in Dublin City Centre with Lorcan Collins.



Ballymoney at Stormont

Year 10 pupils from Dalriada, Ballymoney High, and Our Lady of Lourdes met again as part of their Shared Education project, and visited Stormont.

Pupils were taken on a really interesting tour around the Assembly Buildings and gained a greater understand of how

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laws are made in our country. Special thanks go to Communities Minister Gordon Lyons, and MLAs Philip

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McGuigan, Paul Frew, and Timothy Gaston for taking the time to come and speak to us. Everyone had a great day.

Co-operation Ireland Future Leaders Programme

Representatives from the School's Co-operation Ireland Future Leaders Programme travelled to Hillsborough Castle on Thursday 20 March to celebrate the 5th anniversary of Future Leaders, a programme established to develop the next generation of community leaders, equipping them with the skills and confidence to contribute positively to society.

It was a wonderful experience, with the pupils having the opportunity to meet His Majesty King Charles to discuss issues ranging from the challenges of social media, climate change and mental health. His Majesty, a joint patron of Co-operation Ireland alongside the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, met with young leaders who have participated in the programme, as well as key stakeholders and supporters of the charity.

Presbyterian Moderator praises Special Educational Needs at Kilronan Special School in Magherafelt

Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI), Right Reverend Dr Richard Murray, has praised the 'passion, care and commitment' of those working throughout the Special Educational Needs (SEN) sector.

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During a visit to Kilronan School in Magherafelt, Dr Murray also welcomed the promises made in the recent Programme for Government with regards to SEN, the Moderator said, however, that the commitments made needed to be more than aspirational.

Dr Murray was visiting the school as part of his recent week long tour of PCI's Presbytery of Tyrone, one of the Church's 19 regional bodies. Having already visited Harberton Special School in South Belfast, Roddensvale in Larne, and Castle Tower in Ballymena, his visit to a Kilronan was his fourth visit to a special school since becoming Moderator in June last year.

He also visited a collaborative project that the school runs in partnership with First Magherafelt Presbyterian Church for a group of its school leaver pupils.

Cathedral Calls



Limerick hosts MU Lady Day service



During last week, St Mary's cathedral Limerick hosted the MU Lady Day service.

Dublin parishes ecumenical pilgrimage to St Brigid's, Kildare

St Brigid's Cathedral, Kildare. were delighted to host a recent ecumenical pilgrimage with parishioners from

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Balally Parish (Roman Catholic) and Taney Parish (Church of Ireland)

The parishes were both exploring St Brigid of Kildare. The cathedral expressed thanks to Fr Jim Caffrey and Rev Jane Burns for bringing both parishes to visit the cathedral



Derry choristers sing opera in Armagh

On Saturday afternoon, the boys and girls of the Cathedral Choir sang beautifully in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh, as part of Ulster Touring Opera's production of The Pied Piper by Jonathan Willcocks.

Performing alongside pupils from the Royal School Armagh, Ulster Touring Opera groups, professionals from the Hard



Rain Ensemble and soloist Rebecca Murphy, they truly did a brilliant job—well done to all involved!

However, their job last weekend continued as they joined forces again to sing at 11am on Sunday for a special Family Service for Mother’s Day. The anthem was Samuel Sebastian Wesley’s Love One Another. Evening Prayer with hymns follows at 4pm, and a service of Compline continues this Wednesday evening at 7.30pm.

St Flannan’s grant of €114,600 from Historic Structures Fund

“We are delighted to have been awarded a grant from the Historic Structures Fund for work on our north

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transept roof. The grant of €114,600 is timely as we suffered significant damage in the recent storm.

“We are grateful to Minister of State Christopher O'Sullivan and to all those who worked so hard to put the bid together. It is a great achievement in our 800th year.”

Over €3.5m in funding has been announced for 28 projects throughout the country to help repair and protect our landmark buildings as part of this year's Historic Structures Fund. Learn more: <https://bit.ly/3QSqvYe>

Clergy and ministry



New rector an answer to our prayers - Bishop



“You are the answer to our prayers – in the parishes and in the diocese,” Bishop Andrew Forster told Rev Adrian Dorrian, on Friday evening, as the latter was instituted as Rector of the Parishes of Conwal and Gartan in the Diocese of Raphoe.

Representatives of the Roman Catholic and Presbyterian Churches were in the congregation, along with civic dignitaries including the Mayor of Letterkenny, Cllr Gerry McMonagle, and the former MEP and Eurovision Song Contest winner, Dana Rosemary Scallon.

Welcoming Rev Adrian and his wife Anne to "the family of God in Conwal and Gartan", Bishop Andrew described how much he loved coming to the two parishes. "Conwal, this church, in the heart of such a vibrant, growing town; Gartan



celebrating the wonderful legacy of Columba, just a short distance from his birthplace. And what we hope and pray in this Diocese of Derry and Raphoe is that the DNA of St Columba – the evangelist, the social activist, the church planter – that that DNA of Columba is in each of us as we seek to serve [God]."

Rev Dorrian succeeds Rev David Houlton, the previous incumbent, who retired last summer.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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