

Church News Ireland



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Image of the day – Seasonal Worship



Coleraine Grammar School presented an excellent range of music and talent at a pre-christmas event in St Patrick's Parish Church.

News

Seasonal worship online, TV and radio

Carols from King's

BBC Two, 6pm - Christmas Eve is the 70th anniversary of a festive staple; the celebration of the Nativity, broadcast from The Chapel of King's College, Cambridge. The service of music, readings and prayer is followed by Royal Carols: Together at Christmas on ITV1 at 7.30pm, hosted by the Princess of Wales. Later, Midnight Mass from the Collegiate Church of St Mary's in Warwick (BBC One, 11.40pm) and a less formal celebration in Manchester with Louise Redknapp (ITV1, 11.30pm).

Keith and Christine Getty are Home for Christmas

“Thank you to all who joined us in Belfast! We are thrilled to share our “Home for Christmas” concert will be broadcast on BBC Radio Ulster on Christmas Day at 6pm and on Premier Radio on Christmas Day at 1pm and Boxing Day at 4pm. We hope you can tune in and celebrate with us!”

Capella Caecilliani tribute to John Anderson



CC write - In March of this year we sadly said farewell to John Anderson - a good friend to our choir ever since its early days and a champion of choral music across Northern Ireland and beyond.

John was a great musician, consummate broadcaster and, most importantly, a thoroughly decent person.

As a tribute to John, here he is leading "O come all ye faithful" during BBC Northern Ireland "Sing Carols" in 2004. As well as directing the concert, John produced the broadcast. (Please click centre of photo on page 5 above).

C of E National Online Services

You are invited to join in worship online over Advent and Christmas.

Can't make it to church this Advent and Christmas? Watch our weekly online worship services from across the Church of England and worship with us this festive season.

9am Monday 23 December - Christingle service from St Thomas', Newcastle.

10pm Tuesday 24 December - Midnight Mass service from Manchester Cathedral.

9am Wednesday 25 December - Christmas Day service from Trelawny Benefice.

9am Sunday 29 December - Blue Christmas service from St Mary's, East Lavant.

An online all age Christingle Service

Join the C of E today Monday 23 December for an all age Christingle service from St Thomas Newcastle led by Rev

Lee Kirkby. Along with watching this service you can join in at home. You will need the following items:

1 orange

A piece of red ribbon or tape

4 cocktail sticks

A selection of soft sweets or fruit

A piece of tin foil

A small candle

Something to make a hole in the top of the orange

As we approach Christmas, be sure to tune in and find out how Jesus is the light of the world.

Disclaimer: Please make sure that children are supervised during the creation of their Christingle and that an adult makes the hole for the candle to be placed in.

Join our online community from 9am on Monday. This service has subtitles and BSL interpretation.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship/join-us-church-online/weekly-online-services/christingle-service>

Lisbellaw community responds to charity sit-out

A 12-hour charity sit-out by Revd William Jeffrey, Rector of Lisbellaw Parish Church has brought together people from across the community.



Revd William Jeffrey is joined by Mr Keith Elliott.

Revd William donned his black cape and hat for the event on Tuesday, 17 December at the church from 6.30pm to 7.30pm.

From early morning to evening, a steady stream of people walked to the church to be greeted by Revd William.

This year's charities are Fermanagh Women's Aid and parish funds.

Carrying the Light – Community Lantern Walk in Aughrim

The community of Aughrim in south Wicklow gathered to bring light in the darkness in Advent on Tuesday evening (December 17). St John the Evangelist Church hosted a Community Lantern Walk from the Church of



Leaving the Church of the Sacred Heart.

the Sacred Heart, along the main street of Aughrim to St John's Church at the other end of the village.

Despite the drizzling rain, about 85 people from both church communities participated in the walk, led by the Revd Suzanne Harris and Father Diarmuid Byrne. The choir from the Sacred Heart Church led the carol singing and everyone carried lanterns or torches to light their way.

There was a short stop to sing a few carols around the village Christmas tree. Upon arrival in St John's Church the group enjoyed refreshments of non alcoholic mulled wine and mince pies while the choir sang some more beautiful carol pieces. A wonderful Advent event enjoyed by all.

Rathmichael 'Grit' sees huge sum raised for SVP amid storm Darragh

The Revd Sean Hanily writes - What a memorable weekend was had celebrating the 160th anniversary of the consecration of Rathmichael Church on December 7 and 8. Storm Darragh arrived the night before and left us without power, but that didn't stop us! In true Rathmichael grit, we got on with our plans.

On the morning of Saturday December 7, there was a Christmas Food Sale and Coffee morning in aid of the local Saint Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal. It was a tremendous success, bringing in people from across the wider community to buy the beautiful produce made by Fiona Ashe. Thanks to Geoffrey Perrin and Fiona's hard work (and their wonderful team of volunteers), a staggering sum of €4,500 was raised for the Saint Vincent De Paul Christmas Appeal.

Fiona had been busy prepping for weeks in advance and all of the food for sale on the day was made by her. Others generously brought along baked goods to go along with the coffee on the morning. There may have been a panic about the lack of electricity in the church – but we were all amply supplied with coffee and delicious food.

Some of the food on offer on the day included: Wicklow venison casserole, chicken and ham gratin, pork meatballs in spicy tomato sauce, cottage pie, bacon and cheese tart, rocket and cheese tart, and smoked salmon and dill tart.



Rathmichael Food Sale for St Vincent De Paul in full swing.

The sweet options included fruit tea brack, almond tart, apple and blackberry crumble, rhubarb, cinnamon and orange crumble, Tunisian orange cake, chocolate cake, coffee cake, carrot cake, mince pies, Christmas Florentines and vanilla fudge. A selection of jams was also available.

Needless to say, with such an appetising menu – everything was sold! The atmosphere was wonderful and the local storm damage didn't stop a massive crowd coming along to enjoy the morning.

Cathedral Calls

Families of 700 local children get free-entry passes to Christ Church Cathedral

The theme of ‘stained glass’ underscored the decoration of our cathedral’s Christmas trees by more than 700 local children.

“Over the course of a week, we welcomed students from Warrenmount Primary, Francis St CBS, St Brigids The Coombe, Presentation Primary Georges Hill, St Audoens, Scoil Treasa Naofa, and St Catherine’s NS. After hanging their decorations, the children enjoyed a short tour of the cathedral.

“To show our gratitude for their help, free-entry passes were distributed to enable them to return to the cathedral with their families over the Christmas period”.

Secondary school choirs boost popular Shoppers’ Carols

Several secondary school choirs have helped to boost the festive atmosphere Christ Church Cathedral.

This year Belvedere College, Eureka Kells, and Mount Carmel were welcomed back for the popular Shoppers’ Carols.

These free lunchtime concerts encourage shoppers to take a few minutes out from the holiday hustle and bustle.

The first of the choirs sang on 4 December, performing a selection of holiday favourites.

Cathedral's Giving Tree for oldest working Dublin charity

This year's Giving Tree at Christ Church Cathedral is for Mendicity

Established in 1818, Mendicity is the oldest working charity in Dublin. For over 200 years, they have been creating opportunities for people experiencing homelessness, isolation and marginalisation, to live better lives. They aim to be an inclusive organisation, offering help to all who come to them.

They are particularly looking for warm clothes - jumpers, scarves, hats and gloves - and toiletries for people (mostly men) who use their facility. Please wrap your gift, and add a brief note advising the cathedral team of the content

Clergy and ministry

Father Brendan McMullan

Father Brendan McMullan was an Irish language-loving Belfast priest on whom Troubles left a lasting mark. Irish language and culture, rugby and music were three of Father Brendan's greatest passions.

The Bishop of Down and Connor, Alan McGuckian, was joined by many priests from the diocese as he led the

Requiem Mass at St Colman's Church in Lambeg, where Fr McMullan, who died on November 26, served as parish priest from 1994 to 2005.

It was just one of several parishes in which the late priest served, in each of the four quarters of Belfast.

Born in Wallasey on the Wirral in England in 1930, the family returned to Belfast when Brendan was eight years old. Back in Belfast, he contracted scarlet fever and had to spend five months in hospital.

Mourners were told by Father Martin Kelly that Fr McMullan spoke “Irish from the cradle” and he took particular satisfaction that, even during his early years in England, Irish was his first language. This was something of which he was extremely proud but not a shock, as his parents, Mick and Phoebe, were Irish language enthusiasts from Antrim.

As a priest, he was central to the establishment and continued growth of the Aifreann Gaeilge (Irish Mass) in St Mary's on Chapel Lane and his work impacted the Irish language community throughout Belfast and beyond.

Bunscoil Phobal Feirste posted the following tribute: “He was a priest, a friend and an integral part of school life from the early days and left a lasting impact and footprint on us all. A kind and gentle man who had time to listen to everyone.”

He attended the seminary in Maynooth and was ordained in 1964 before a period teaching in St Malachy's, where he and his brother, the late Father Kevin, drove the school's

growing reputation for music through their work on the choir and orchestra. He served in St Patrick's on Donegall Street from 1969 to 1981 as the Troubles raged all around.

Appropriately, given the lasting impression left on him by this period, his ashes will be inurned in the church next month.

The horror of the McGurk's Bar bomb which killed 15, including two children, and devastated the parish in 1971 left its imprint on him. Fr Brendan attended the scene and carried the burden of the experience with him for the rest of his life.

Paying tribute, Father Eugene O'Neill wrote: "Fr Brendan will be fondly remembered for his love of music and his Irish classes. Many in the parish received their first introduction to Irish from Fr Brendan. He always loved his time in Donegall Street and to the end of his life spoke fondly of the parish.

"He remembered names, faces and families, often asking me about them, and spoke movingly of the McGurk's Bar bombing and the many other wounds borne by the people of St Patrick's in those years."

McGurk's was not his last brush with loyalist terror.

Fr Brendan was hijacked at gunpoint in July 2000 when driving along Donegall Road. However, this was not one burden he could keep to himself: his terror was captured by a photographer and made the international press.

In an interview with this newspaper after the incident, he confessed to being “badly shaken”.

“One of the hijackers told me to get out of the car,” he said. “He seemed to be pointing a gun at my window. That and the fact that they were wearing hoods did make me fear for my life.”

A Good Samaritan couple, who had witnessed the attack, came to his aid: “The young couple told me they would drop me wherever I wanted to go. I am very grateful to them for their help and I will be making sure I let them know.”

Fr McMullan also said he had been inundated with cards and messages of support from both sides of the community.

The following week, as parish priest in Derriaghy, he had to contend with even more trouble when a tyre was placed against the door of St Patrick's Church and set on fire.

There was scorch damage to the door and some smoke damage to the building. A letter from his brother Mícheál,



who was unable to travel from Dublin for the funeral, was read out at the cremation in Roselawn Cemetery.

It told those present that though Fr Brendan had come “through a lot in more recent years”, not all of it could be put down to sectarian terror.

A particularly bruising Saturday match meant he turned up at church the following day “having to sport two rugby-caused black eyes while saying Mass in St Patrick's on a Sunday morning”, much to the annoyance of his mother.

“Every Easter Monday you ran a cross-community challenge match featuring a Civil Service RFC team versus a squad of Gaelic players from greater Andersonstown. Your team was called the Stags and I was your sole supporter... The Stags never won but they sure put it up to the rugby boys.”

Among the items which lay beside his coffin in St Colman's were a Munster rugby scarf, a match programme, a copy of an autobiography he had published in 2016, titled *Rabharta agus Mallmhuir I mBéal Feirste* (High and low tide in Belfast), and the sheet music of William Byrd's Mass for Four Voices.

He was given a musical send-off with contributions from nieces, nephews, relatives and friends.

The local scout group, which he revived when he served the parish, provided a guard of honour as his coffin left the church.

December 23, 2024

Fr Brendan McMullan is survived by his brothers Mícheál and Fergus, his sister-in-law, brother-in-law, nieces, nephews, grand-nieces and grand-nephews, cousins and extended family.

Two new Canons appointed to Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin



Canon Suzanne Harris and Canon Paul Arbuthnot.

Archbishop Michael Jackson has announced two appointments to the Chapter of Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin. Canon Paul Arbuthnot and the Revd Suzanne Harris have been appointed Canons of the cathedral.

The Revd Suzanne Harris is Rector of Castlemacadam, Ballinatone and Aughrim while Canon Paul Arbuthnot will be

Dean of Residence of Trinity College Dublin from January 1. He is currently Vicar of St Ann's.

Making the announcement, Archbishop Jackson said Paul and Suzanne would make their own distinct contributions to the cathedral. "I am delighted that both Paul and Suzanne have accepted my invitation to join the Chapter of Christ Church Cathedral. I know that both will contribute to the life of the cathedral as we approach the millennium of the cathedral itself. Each has distinct talents of faithfulness, encouragement and pragmatism. I look forward to working with them in the days and years ahead," he commented.

Welcoming the new appointments, Dean Dermot Dunne said: "I am very happy with the Archbishop's latest appointments to the vacant seats on the Cathedral Chapter. Both Paul and Susanne will bring their own individual charisms in ministry to bear on the chapter and the chapter will be much the richer by their presence. I look forward to working and sharing ministry with both".

Suzanne said she was honoured to accept the role. "I am honoured and delighted to accept the kind invitation of the Archbishop to become a Canon of Christ Church Cathedral. I look forward to working with the Dean and the Cathedral staff, and supporting the ministry of the Cathedral in my new role," she stated.

"I am also looking forward to further strengthening the strong connection between the mother church of the dioceses and the more rural parishes in areas of south Glendalough, working together in unity," she added.

Paul noted that it is an exciting time to be involved with the cathedral. “It is my delight to have been appointed a Canon of Christ Church Cathedral. I am looking forward to taking my place in the corporate life of this ancient house of prayer. To join in the unbroken pattern of witness, prayer, and sacramental worship which was established in Christ Church in 1028 is a joy. It is a particularly exciting time to be a member of the chapter and wider cathedral community as it prepares to celebrate a millennium of prayer and witness in the city of Dublin in 2028.

“As the incoming Dean of Residence of Trinity College Dublin, I also look forward to helping establish and develop a fruitful relationship with Christ Church, whose dedication is to the Holy Trinity. Both of these great Dublin institutions are committed to human flourishing and I look forward to exploring how this can be achieved in a Godly way.



Appointment to Upper and Lower Kilwarlin

The Bishop of Down & Dromore, Rt Rev Dave McClay has appointed the Revd Elaine Pentland as Priest-in-

Charge of the Grouped Parishes of Upper and Lower Kilwarlin in the Diocese of Down.

Elaine is currently serving as Curate Assistant in Willowfield Church.

A date for the Service of Introduction will be announced in due course.

Poem for today

A Christmas Light in Ireland

A candle glows in the window pane,
Through soft, cold whispers of winter's refrain.
Its golden flame, a quiet cheer,
Calls to the world: "You're welcome here."

On Christmas days, in each Irish home,
The light shines bright for those who roam.
A beacon of hope, in the frosted air,
A silent promise: "We'll always care."

Through snow-kissed fields and starlit skies,
The candle reflects in wandering eyes.
It tells of laughter, of hearths that gleam,
Of Christmas wishes and timeless dreams.

The scent of pine and the warmth of fire,
The glow of the light climbing ever higher.
It reaches the hearts of all who stray,
Bringing them closer on this special day.

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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Link in Monday through Saturday from early morning

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