

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Launch of the Big Lunch

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February 16, 2024

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Synergy at the launch of The Big Lunch Northern Ireland



Clair McCollum speaks with 4 Corners' Ed Peterson (r) Corrymeela's Alex Wimberly (m) and Eden Project's Grainne McCloskey

Friends from Corrymeela, 4 Corners' Festival, Eden Project, and Rainbow Alley joined the organisers of The Big Lunch Northern Ireland 2024... to launch this year's programme.

February 16, 2024

They shared a meal with The Lord Mayor and many others gathered at 2 Royal Avenue.



Above -Storyteller Liz Weir talks about the power of sharing food and stories around a table as Grainne McCloskey looks on.

Left - Corrymeela member Gordon McDade of ForthSpring Intercommunity Group talks about the Big Lunch



Left - Corrymeela Member Jo Boal talks about the Big Lunch and Rainbow Alley

Front page photo - Corrymeela member Jo Boal, 4 Corners' Ed Peterson, the Rt Hn. the Lord Mayor Ryan Murphy, Leader Alex Wimberly, storyteller Liz Weir, Presenter Clair McCollum and Ede Project's Grainne McCloskey - Photos from John Healy Photography

News

C of I students at Maynooth Inter-Seminary service

A number of students from the Church of Ireland Theological Institute travelled to St Patrick's National Seminary Maynooth, on Thursday 8th February to join in a slightly belated service to celebrate Christian Unity.

The sermon was delivered by Rev Canon Dr Maurice Elliott on the theme of

February 16, 2024

‘Planted and rooted in love’ from St. Paul’s letter to the Ephesians. Following the service all present enjoyed dining together and the Church of Ireland delegation was then given a short tour of the college and chapel in Maynooth.



Music support at St Peter’s Cathedral, Belfast

Lisa from Tescos, Newtownabbey, greatly encouraged St Peter’s Cathedral choristers when she called by to present them with a cheque representing the funds raised by their Book Table in December.

“We’re continually thankful to Tesco for their ongoing support of our music outreach program development” said a choir spokesperson.

30 years as organist in Newtownards

Warmest congratulations have been expressed to Mr Stephen Shaw who has just celebrated 30 years as Director of Music in St Mark’s Newtownards.

“We were delighted to mark Stephen’s 30 years as Director of Music at St Mark’s on Sunday past,” said Revd Peter Hilton, Curate Assistant. “He has been a dedicated servant to the Parish and we are grateful to God for his faithful and fruitful ministry in St Mark’s. I have enjoyed working with and getting to know Stephen over the past few years, and pray for God’s continued favour, guidance, blessing and strength on Stephen, Maxine and their family.”

Prior to coming to St Mark’s Stephen was, respectively, organist in Killinchy Parish Church, St Mary’s Parish Church, Belfast, and Assistant Organist at Down Cathedral.

“I first encountered the pipe organ as a pupil at Methodist College, Belfast,” says Stephen. “I’ve always been thankful for the skill and dedication of my organ tutor, Mr Garry Rodway, and I began to play regularly in church from the age of seventeen, in 1976.

“When I was appointed Director of Music in St Mark’s in 1994, I little thought that I would still be here thirty years later. However, St Mark’s wove itself into our family life: my



wife sings in the choir, and my parents' funeral services, our son and daughter-in-law's wedding and our grandson's baptism have all taken place here.

“In addition, I have been fortunate indeed to work with very supportive clergy, a dedicated loyal choir and to play an instrument of real quality so the notion of moving somewhere else has never been a consideration. It has been a very real privilege to play some small part in the life of our vibrant parish and I look forward to continuing in the role for the foreseeable future.”

Irish Synodal Pathway conducts regional gatherings ahead of its next phase

The Irish Synodal Pathway very recently convened regional and online gatherings with key representatives from dioceses, religious congregations, movements and associations.

February 16, 2024

Bringing together lay men and women, priests, deacons, bishops, and religious brothers and sisters, members of the Synodal Pathway team worked with local representatives to understand and commit to the task ahead of the next phase of the Universal Synod on Synodality.

However, each diocese and group has also been encouraged to renew its local synodal team for the Irish Synodal Pathway. General Secretary for the Irish Synodal Pathway, Julieann Moran (pictured), said, “the success of the pathway rests on consistent and continued engagement in the parishes across the 26 dioceses of Ireland, as well as the engagement of religious communities, lay movements and associations, and other Church bodies, so these teams have an essential role to play on the journey ahead.”

Recognising the unique context of each diocese and religious group, Ms Moran said, “by convening these regional gatherings, it is our hope that the dioceses and groups can learn from each other’s experiences; that they can utilise the collective wisdom in the gatherings, adopt and adapt strategies to suit their particular circumstances, and foster a synodal style of collaboration with each other.”

Video The Synodal Pathway – The journey so far

The regional meetings took place at the end of January in Cork, Kildare, Mayo, and Tyrone, with a fifth online meeting for members of movements and associations.

The Irish Synodal Pathway team shared resources and updates which included a video resource for local communities about the journey so far of both synodal

February 16, 2024

processes – the universal and the Irish – and next steps on the Irish Synodal Pathway. See the video resource above.

The regional meetings also saw the launch of a synodal leadership training programme, based on research carried out by the Steering Committee in March last year. This initiative hopes to equip participants with the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to effectively lead synodal processes within their respective communities.

By investing in leadership development, the Irish Synodal Pathway hopes to see individuals being equipped to facilitate meaningful dialogues at local level, particularly in the synodal methodology of Conversations in the Spirit.

This programme also represents an investment in the long-term, so as to nurture a culture of synodality that extends beyond the duration of any specific initiative, into the day-to-day life and mission of the Church in Ireland.

Upcoming C of I Historical Society Conference

The next meeting of the Society will be held in the Henry Roe Room (previously known as the Music Room) of Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin on Saturday 24 February 2024.

Programme

10.30 Tea/Coffee and Registration

February 16, 2024

11.00 am David O'Shea, Music and Ritualism in the Victorian Church of Ireland

12.00 pm Dagmar Ó Riain-Raedel, From the Rhine to the Liffey: the beginning of Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin

1.00 pm Lunch

2.00 pm Thomas Mohr, The Southern Protestant Media and the Birth of the Irish State in 1922

3.00 pm David Jameson, The Tilson Case: "Dreary domestic dispute" or "The most serious development in Eire for a very long time"?

Speakers

David Jameson is a graduate of University College Dublin (B.A.) and Trinity College Dublin (M.Phil & PhD) and the author of *The Tilson Case: Church and state in 1950s Ireland*. He is an Adjunct Teaching Fellow in Trinity College Dublin and a sub-3 hour marathon runner.

Thomas Mohr is an associate professor at the School of Law, University College Dublin. He is vice president of the Irish Legal History Society and book review editor of the *Irish Jurist*, Ireland's oldest law journal. His publications on Irish legal history range from medieval Gaelic law to the law of the independent Irish state in the 20th century. His latest books are *Guardian of the Treaty – The Privy Council Appeal and Irish Sovereignty* (2016) and *Law and the Idea of Liberty in Ireland – From Magna Carta to the Present* (with Peter Crooks, 2023).

February 16, 2024

Dagmar Ó Riain-Raedel is a historian based in Cork and has published and lectured widely on Irish connections with the Continent during the Middle Ages.

David O'Shea is Organist of Sandford Parish Church and St Philip's Milltown in south Dublin. He is the author of *The Choral Foundation of the Chapel Royal, Dublin Castle*, recently published by The Boydell Press.

Registration and Attendance

Attendance is free to all paid-up members. Non-members can purchase a one-day membership for €10/£10.

Membership see -

[\[https://christchurchcathedral.ie/church-of-ireland-historical-society-conference/\]](https://christchurchcathedral.ie/church-of-ireland-historical-society-conference/)

Dates of C of I Diocesan synods

Diocesan synods are significant gatherings in the life of the Church of Ireland, for both its governance and for a sense of community and networking among leaders, clergy and lay, and the organisations with whom it serves.

Synods are planned for these dates and venues in 2024:

Thursday, 13th June – Connor
Christ Church, Lisburn

Thursday, 20th June – Down & Dromore

February 16, 2024

St Mark's, Dundela, East Belfast

Thursday, 26th September – Clogher

St Macartin's Cathedral Hall, Enniskillen

Saturday, 28th September – Meath & Kildare

The Oak Centre, Dunboyne

Tuesday, 1st October – Dublin & Glendalough

Taney Parish Centre, Dundrum

Saturday, 5th October – Cork, Cloyne & Ross

Bandon Grammar School, Bandon

Saturday, 12th October – Kilmore, Elphin & Ardagh

Bush Hotel, Carrick-on-Shannon

Saturday, 19th October – Cashel, Ferns & Ossory

Dolmen Hotel, Carlow

Saturday, 19th October – Tuam, Limerick & Killaloe

Woodstock Hotel, Ennis

Tuesday, 22nd October – Armagh

Alexander Synod Hall, Church House, Armagh

Wednesday, 23rd October – Derry & Raphoe

Venue to be confirmed

General Synod 2024 which will be held in the Armagh City Hotel, Armagh, from Friday, 10th May, to Saturday, 11th May 2024, with Day 3 taking place remotely on the evening of

February 16, 2024

Tuesday 14th May and the evening of Thursday 16th May (if required).

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books



Applications open!

Looking for a life-changing experience?

February 16, 2024

The Horizons Volunteer Programme offers you the opportunity to spend a year living at Corrymeela's Ballycastle Centre, assisting their teams as they deliver programmes for groups from different backgrounds and enabling participants to nurture deeper relationships and explore how to live well together.

Apply now for this September or find out more:

<https://www.corrymeela.org/volunteer>

Watch and pray app to help children engage

The C of E's WatchAndPray app has daily reflections and prayers to help children engage with the season.

Seek God as a family in the coming weeks and download the app today.

→  cofe.io/WatchAndPrayAndroid

→  cofe.io/WatchAndPrayiOS

Celtic Psalms on your journey towards Easter

The first week of Lent seems to be an appropriate time to share our TEDx talk, which just came out, as the Psalms often accompany people on the journey towards Easter. And this year, Celtic Psalms will be holding Candlelight concerts during Holy Week... and if you're in Belfast or Derry

<https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/celtic-psalms-2990559>



400th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION CONCERT
In City Church Bangor
(First Bangor Presbyterian)

Saturday 24 February 2024
at 7.30pm

*KING'S CHORALE

*JACQUI BROWN (Soloist)
BARBARA REID (Pianist)
& CITY CHURCH BANGOR WORSHIP GROUP

*BB UKE CREW

*CAST FROM CITY CHURCH BANGOR
'JOSEPH & THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOUR DREAMCOAT'

Suggested donation on the night £10
(Including Supper)

Looking for a way you can serve and bless others this Lent?

Download the Mothers Union free daily Lent calendar and find ideas and inspiration for the next 40ish days:

<https://www.mothersunion.org/sites/default/files/resources/public/A%20Family%20Lent%20Calendar%202024%20.pdf>

February 16, 2024

PCI Ministry Taster Day

**Find out more
about serving
God and
studying for
the ministry
of PCI at the
Ministry
Taster Day**

At Union
Theological
College,
Belfast on Saturday 16 March 2024
10.30am–1pm



The day will include:

- *Current and former students' experiences of study
- *Study courses and pathways
- *Ministry application process
- *Lunch (1pm)

This event is free but booking is essential.

Please register by Friday 8 March for catering purposes via
e-mail: admin@union.ac.uk

February 16, 2024

More info and videos on being a minister in PCI can be watched here:

bit.ly/unionopenday

In the media

Anti-Clinton and pro-palestinian projection onto QUB building 'not acceptable' - Belfast Telegraph

Queen's University has criticised those behind a pro-Palestine message projected onto its main building calling for the removal of Hillary Clinton as Chancellor, Mark Bain writes.

The university said it was “not acceptable” for its buildings to be used to display political messages.

A similar message was displayed across the BBC's Broadcasting House in the city centre, it is understood.

The slogan “From the river to the sea, Clinton out of QUB” was displayed across the main university building on Tuesday evening.

Footage of the incident appeared on social media. The phrase displayed in the incident is commonly used as a rallying cry for those who call for the establishment of a state of Palestine from the Jordan River to the

Mediterranean Sea, which would erase the current state of Israel.

A spokesperson for the university said security moved quickly to ensure the message which rolled across the main university building was removed.

“An unauthorised message was reportedly projected onto a number of buildings across Belfast \[on Tuesday] night, including Queen's University and BBC Broadcasting House,” they said.

“While we are a university of free expression, it is not acceptable for the university to be used in this way without permission and our security team quickly intervened.

“Queen's recognises the events that have resulted in the harrowing loss of life in the Middle East and the complex nature of the current conflict.

“The university is mindful of our students and colleagues with families and other connections in the region and remain committed to supporting them at this difficult time.”

QUB did not say whether further investigations are under way or if any students at the university were involved in the stunt.

DUP North Belfast MLA Phillip Brett said: “‘From the river to the sea’ is an anti-Semitic statement meaning the Israeli state and its people should be erased.”

“This is an appalling and grotesquely offensive comment.

February 16, 2024

“I represent a constituency with a significant Jewish population and Belfast's only synagogue. Queen's needs to fully investigate this incident...

They need to take firm action. This cannot go unchallenged. There needs to be a clear statement from the university condemning this action.

“I want to see the hostages freed and peace talks advanced so there can be an end to the killing.”

It is not the first time the role played by former US First Lady and Secretary of State Mrs Clinton at the university has been called into question over her stance on the Israel-Palestine conflict.

She has previously posted a video on social media explaining that those who support a temporary cessation of hostilities “do not understand Hamas”.

She added: “That is not possible. It would be such a gift to Hamas because they would spend whatever time there was a ceasefire in effect rebuilding their armaments, creating stronger positions to be able to fend off an eventual assault by the Israelis.

“We are in a very different world. I don't think it had to be the world we are in, but that's the world we are and we've got to figure a way forward through it.”

At the time, People Before Profit MLA Gerry Carroll said Queen's “should have no truck with apartheid Israel's backers”, while former councillor Fiona Ferguson said: “The

February 16, 2024

QUB student movement should be calling for this warmonger to be removed.”

Mrs Clinton was appointed Chancellor at Queen's in 2020.

At the time, the university said: “An internationally recognised public servant, Secretary Clinton has strong links with Queen's and NI, especially because of her outstanding contribution to peace and reconciliation in NI.”

Mrs Clinton's installation in 2021 was marred, though, as a number of protesters against US foreign policy gathered outside the university on her arrival, chanting “shame on Queen's”.

Jewish ‘verbal abuse’ Belfast comic banned by theatre - News Letter

A London theatre has banned a Belfast comedian after Jewish audience members claimed they were "subjected to verbal abuse" and made to feel "unsafe".

The Soho Theatre said Paul Currie would not be invited back to perform at the West End theatre following an incident on Saturday evening which allegedly saw the comedian “aggressively demand” Jewish members of the audience leave the venue.

The Campaign Against Antisemitism (CAA) said it had been told by a Jewish audience member that Currie led his audience in “discriminatory chanting” and demanded to

February 16, 2024

know why one Israeli attendee did not stand and applaud when a Ukrainian and Palestinian flag were unveiled. In a statement, Soho Theatre said: “Such appalling actions are unacceptable and have no place on our stages, now or ever.

“We will not be inviting Paul Currie back to perform at our venue.”

The incident occurred at the end of Currie’s hour-long show Shtoom, a performance described on the theatre’s website as a “unique, surrealist, Dada punk-clown, non-verbal experience” in which the Belfast comedian does not speak. Jewish audience members were then reportedly “hounded out” of the gig, which had an audience of about 200, according to the CAA – with others in the audience allegedly shouting “get out” and “free Palestine”.

“Whilst we robustly support the rights of artists to express a wide range of views in their shows, intimidation of audience members, acts of antisemitism or any other forms of racism will not be tolerated,” the theatre said.

The theatre, which is a registered charity and used to be a synagogue, added that it was consulting with the Metropolitan Police and working with the CAA to “safeguard the much-valued inclusivity” of the venue.

A Met Police spokesperson said on Monday: “We are aware of the incident that took place at the Soho Theatre on Saturday evening.”

February 16, 2024

“A report was submitted to the police on Monday and enquiries are ongoing,” they added.

The Charity Commission has said it is assessing information “to determine if there is a role” for the regulator.

Currie has been contacted for comment.

Explosion of hatred’ against UK Jews since Oct 7 outrage - Daily Telegraph

Anti -semetism hit an all-time high last year in an “explosion of hatred” against the Jewish community following the Hamas terror attacks on Israel, official figures show, Charles Hymas Home Affairs Editor writes.

The Community Security Trust (CST) said the surge in anti-Jewish attacks, threats and abuse amounted to a “celebration” of Hamas’s Oct 7 massacre by anti-Semites whose own hatred was fuelled by the brutality of the attacks.

Its annual report said that there were 4,103 anti-Semitic incidents in the UK last year, nearly double the previous record in 2021, covering all types of “hate” against Jewish people.

Mark Gardner, the CST chief executive, said: “British Jews are strong and resilient, but the explosion in hatred against our community is an absolute disgrace.”

February 16, 2024

James Cleverly, the Home Secretary, branded the rise in anti-Semitism “utterly deplorable” and said he would “do everything in my power” to ensure the Jewish community was safe.

Yvette Cooper, the shadow home secretary, said the rise was “appalling and intolerable” and a “stain on our society”.

Her comments come as the Labour party faces criticism over its handling of anti-Semitism allegations after Sir Keir Starmer was forced to suspend two parliamentary candidates over remarks they made about Israel.

The CST recorded 48 anti-Semitic incidents connected to political parties or their supporters, of which 35 were Labour-related.

These included anti-Semitic incidents targeted at Labour figures, which meant they “should not be treated as a measure of incident perpetrated by Labour party members”, said the report. Mr Gardner condemned the rise of incidents in schools, universities, workplaces, on the streets and on social media. “We condemn the stony silence from those sections of society that eagerly call out racism in every other case, except when it comes to Jew hate,” he said.

Two thirds of the anti-Semitism reports received by the CST – a charity which protects Jews against racism – were on or after Oct 7.

Attacks increased by 147 per cent compared to the 1,662 recorded in 2022, and were 81 per cent higher than the previous annual record of 2,261 in 2021.

The CST said the speed at which anti-Semites mobilised after the attack, and the huge increase in anti-Jewish hate, “was, if anything, a celebration of Hamas’ massacre by people whose own hatred was emboldened and, in their minds, legitimised by the brutality enacted on civilians in southern Israel”.

The first incident inspired by Hamas’ attack was reported to CST at 12:55pm on the same day, when a vehicle drove past a synagogue in Hertfordshire with a Palestinian flag attached, windows wound down and an occupant shaking their fist in the air towards the synagogue. By the morning of Oct 9, “Free Palestine” graffiti was sprayed on a bridge in Golders Green, the heart of one of London’s largest Jewish communities. A total of 31 anti-Semitic incidents were reported to CST within 24 hours of the Hamas attack, while it peaked at 416 the following week.

Incidents were at a record high across all types of “hate” last year. CST recorded 266 assaults, double the 136 in 2022 and the most ever recorded in a year. Cases of damage and desecration of Jewish property rose by 146 per cent from 74 in 2022 to 182 last year, the highest ever annual figure in the category.

Threats to people, institutions or property – as opposed to more general abuse – rose by 196 per cent from 103 incidents in 2022 to 305 last year, another record. Abusive behaviour also hit a record high with 3,328 incidents.

The charity noted a “worrying proportion of children perpetrating anti-Semitism”, with under-18s thought to be

February 16, 2024

behind a fifth of the 2,086 incidents recorded where the offender or offenders' approximate age was provided.

Speaking to the soul

Go

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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