# **Church News Ireland**



## Image of the day – CIYD Youth Forum 2025

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### **News** -

4 Corners introducing I'll Call You Home at St Colmcille's Church Down and Dromore's Swiss hike information evening Temporary relocation of church services in Westport by Storm Eowyn Search is seeking an honorary treasurer

### **Education** -

BRA represented at Holocaust Memorial Day Exams can be tough – for both kids and parents DUP appoints Lord Weir to EA Board after elevation of Storey to chairperson

### **Cathedral Calls -**

Full house for Sunday's Patronal Festival in Kildare

### **Clergy and ministry -**

Church support for young people who have been bereaved Pathways to the future in Down and Connor

## Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books -

St Brigid, Cecil Frances Alexander and Rosamond Stephen Sanctuary Coffee Mornings at Queen's University All Saints Kickers - Line dancing in Derry St Ann's Dublin recitals **Perspective -**Pope Francis: 'Conversion is a lifelong journey'

### Speaking to the soul -

Short reading and a prayer daily on this site Church News Ireland

# Image of the day – CIYD Youth Forum 2025



The Church of Ireland Youth Department held its annual forum at Drumantine last week end.

Photo page 1 is of six members and two leaders from Derry and Raphoe. Photo left -Bishop Pat Storey of Meath and Kildare had a busy week end chairing sessions.

Below - the Connor Crew of members and leaders

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# News

## 4 Corners introducing I'll Call You Home at St Colmcille's Church

The closing 4Corners event will make sense of the festival and send us out encouraged and inspired to make Belfast a home for ourselves and everyone.

Rev. Neil Craigan, minister at White Bear Lake, Minnesota will speak to tie up the festival and we will end the festival to the sound of Dana Masters' song I'll Be Your Home which should be the festival's theme song.

Andrew Masters, Vineyard pastor in Lisburn will then lead us out of the festival.

Join us on Sunday 9 February at 7pm.

For more on the 4 Corners festival programme, visit the link below

https://www.4cornersfestival.com/festival-events/ill-call-youhome/

# Down and Dromore's Swiss hike information evening

They say it is similar to the 4 Peaks Challenge - but in Switzerland...so, do you want go a wandering along a mountain track...

February 5, 2025



A recent residential gathering of Down & Dromore in Sligo for Bible study and worship.

The diocese says - In 2022 and 2024 we took groups of adults to complete the 4 Peaks challenge around the U.K. and this year there is the possibility of a trip to Switzerland to complete a few stages of the Via Alpina with a few optional peaks for those that are keen.

This is a trip open to anyone in the diocese but will not be a Down and Dromore initiative - participants will be responsible for their own flights, insurance, safety etc.

When is it? Sunday 21st to Tuesday 24th June 2025.

Where? Flying from Dublin to Zurich and then on to Interlaken -from where we start out on each of the 2 walking challenges.

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Who can do it? Anyone over 18 who has decent basic level of fitness. The 2 day hikes are not technical and stay on paths. However, they will involve up to 8 hours walking each day and the equivalent of climbing 2 Slieve Donards. Each day also involves around 23Km (14miles) walking. If, at the moment, you struggle to walk for more than an hour or two then this is not for you. We won't walk fast but it will be steady.

An information Zoom Meeting - [<u>https://</u> <u>www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/swiss-hike-information-evening-</u> <u>tickets-1207035889839?aff=erelpanelorg</u>]

## Temporary relocation of church services in Westport by Storm Eowyn

Due to the present closure of Holy Trinity Church following Storm Eowyn, from Sunday 2nd February, services normally held in Holy Trinity Westport will be held in St Mary's Church Westport, and at the later time of 12 noon.

The parish states, "We are most grateful to the community of St. Mary's Church, Westport and to Fr John Kenny for this expression of ecumenical friendship and solidarity in accommodating us in this way and allowing us to avail of their own consecrated space.

"There is some parking on the Mall and on James Street, and in the carpark behind St Mary's. "If you have any queries or concerns, please contact us, aughaval@tuam.anglican.org or 083 800 3233

## Search is seeking an honorary treasurer

### The Church of Ireland journal, Search, is seeking an honorary treasurer to succeed the heroically long serving, Michael Denton, who wishes to retire.

The main duties are to keep the accounts, maintain the subscription list, organize the mailing list and to assist at the Search stand at the General Synod. The ideal person will have computer keyboard skills. basic accounting skills and a good knowledge of Excel. Interested persons may contact the Search Honorary Secretary, Professor Elizabeth Oldham, (EOLDHAM@tcd.ie) for more details.

# Education

# **Belfast Royal Academy** represented at **Holocaust Memorial Day**

This Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) marked the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest **Church News Ireland** 



Nazi concentration camp complex, and the 30th anniversary of the genocide in Bosnia. M6 pupil, Grace Rogan, represented **Belfast Royal** Academy in the Regional Northern Ireland



Ceremony at City Hall on 23rd January to mark Holocaust Memorial Day where she spoke about the life experiences of Ivor Pearl, a Hungarian Jew. Ivor was 12 years old when he was taken to Auschwitz and survived with the help of his older brother. The rest of his family did not survive. In Ivor's words, "All I can do is talk about my experiences and to tell whoever wants to listen what happened. Even if there's only one person who has heard either me or somebody else's story, it makes a difference."

This 'Light the Darkness' national moment for Holocaust Memorial Day remembers those who were murdered, for who they were, and stands against prejudice and hatred today.

# Exams can be tough – for both kids and parents

Join an insightful session with Parentkind packed with practical tools to help your child manage the pressures of exam season with confidence and resilience.

In this webinar, you'll learn how to:

Spot the signs of stress: Recognise when your child feels overwhelmed and understand their needs.

Implement effective coping strategies: Explore practical techniques for fostering open communication and creating a supportive, calming home environment.

Support their well-being: Help your child navigate exam stress while maintaining their emotional and mental health. Perfect for parents of older children, this session will empower you to make a real difference during a challenging time.

Book Here: <u>https://www.parentkind.org.uk/your-pta-</u> <u>expert/parent-webinars#heading465737n</u>

# DUP appoints Lord Weir to EA Board after elevation of Storey to chairperson

### Former Education Minister Lord Peter Weir has been appointed to the board of the Education Authority, Mark Bain writes in the Belfast Telegraph.

Lord Weir will be replacing the DUP's political representative Mervyn Storey, following his appointment as the chairperson of the EA Board, a role he took up on January 1 this year.

Mr Storey's successful application for the chairperson's role had left seven political representatives on the EA Board, with political parties sharing the seats and with the DUP permitted to nominate a replacement.

Political members are not ministerial appointments and are nominated by their respective political parties in accordance with Article 3, Schedule 1 of the Education Act (Northern Ireland) 2014. Lord Weir is a former member of the Assembly.

He served as Education Minister from January 2020 until June 2021, before being replaced by Michelle McIlveen, and was previously chairperson of the Assembly's Education Committee.

As part of the appointment he has declared that, during the past five years, he has undertaken political activity on behalf of the DUP.

He is a member of the House of Lords for which he receives an attendance allowance when participating in proceedings.

The Board of the EA comprises a chairperson appointed by the minister and 20 members who are nominated by a range of interests.

There are 12 members representing the trustees of maintained schools, transferors of controlled schools, Irishmedium schools, integrated schools, voluntary grammar schools and controlled grammar schools, alongside eight political members who are nominated by the relevant political parties.

Other political appointment to the board are Stephen Donnelly (Alliance), Rachael Ferguson (Alliance), Jonathan Craig (DUP), Paul Kavanagh (Sinn Fein), Frank Maskey (Sinn Fein), Angie Mervyn (Sinn Fein) and John Kyle (UUP). Since Lord Weir took over as Education Minister from Sinn Fein's John O'Dowd, the DUP has retained the position in the Executive.

There was criticism over the appointment of Mr Storey to the position as chairperson, the appointment made by DUP Education Minister Paul Givan.

Sinn Fein's Pat Sheehan MLA, deputy chair of Stormont's Education Committee, said Mr Storey's "previous role as a DUP minister, MLA, and current DUP councillor raises obvious questions for the minister about the appointment".

Mr Storey's position as chairperson remains unaffected by the DUP appointment of Lord Weir.

February 5, 2025 **Cathedral Calls** Full house for Sunday's Patronal Festival in Kildare

There was a full house for Sunday's Patronal Festival in the cathedral, celebrating our Patron, St Brigid of Kildare.



It was a great joy to welcome the former Dean of Kildare, Rev Robert Townley back to preach and to be joined by members of the Cathedral Chapter and local clergy.

Warmest thanks to Birr Church News Ireland

Choral Society for joining with our cathedral choir to sing 'The Birr Mass', written by Peter Whyte. Deepest thanks also to St. Brigid's Parish, Kildare Town for generously allowing the use of Áras Bhríde to serve tea and sandwiches after the service.

# **Clergy and ministry**

# Church support for young people who have been bereaved

The Rev'd Paul Galluci (The Big House) and Mrs Laura Creaney (The Southern Trust) spoke with youth leaders, teachers, pastoral care visitors and clergy from Armagh diocese regarding how the Church supports young people who have been bereaved.

It was a very informative, practical and reflective morning together. (Wednesday 29th January, 2025)

# Pathways to the future in Down and Connor

Parish leaders from across the diocese of Down and Connor joined Aishling and Fr Paul today for a formation day on facilitation within parish ministry at Drumalis Retreat and Conference Centre, Larne.

The focus of the day was on the 'art of accompaniment', faith development resources, facilitation skills within various group contexts and evangelisation in a digital age. This day was a follow up to the first in a series of facilitation training as part of the Pathways to the Future leadership training being rolled out across the diocese.

"We would like to thank Brian McKee for his warm words of welcome and the volunteers and staff at Drumalis for their support and hospitality. We would like to especially thank everyone who participated on the training day for your enthusiasm, engagement and commitment. We look forward to seeing you on



future events and wish you every blessing in your parish roles and ministries."; Church News Ireland

# Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books



# St Brigid, Cecil Frances Alexander and Rosamond Stephen

To celebrate St Brigid's Day and bring back more regular blogging on the Archive of the Month platform the RCB Library has chosen to highlight the stories of two remarkable women, Cecil Frances Alexander and Rosamond Stephen whose lives exemplify the values represented by the Saint. Both women made significant contributions to the Church, sharing their passion through poetry, prose and social action.

Read more at:

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https://www.churchofireland.org/news/12702/celebratingtwo-women-in-the

# Sanctuary Coffee Mornings at Queen's University

Sanctuary Coffee Mornings at Queen's University Belfast are back are back, now with a full information programme for 2025.

### What are Sanctuary Coffee Mornings?

They're a welcoming space for everyone to enjoy tea, coffee, pastries, and, most importantly, gain access to useful information. The sessions take place every Wednesday from 10am to 12.30pm at 48 University Road. You'll find us in the Seminar Room (ground floor, first door on the right as you enter the building).

### **February sessions are here!**

The first four sessions will run throughout February. Places are limited, so please make sure you register in advance using the links provided below.

### Language Support:

An Arabic interpreter will be available at all sessions. If you need interpretation in another language, you can let us know during registration, and we'll do our best to accommodate you.



Children are welcome to join, but they must be supervised by parents at all times. We'll have some toys available to help keep them entertained.

### What to Expect:

Each session includes a short presentation and plenty of time for questions.

Visit the Sanctuary Events page here:

### https://lnkd.in/eRm6SXga

Or: here are the TOPICS and REGISTRATION LINKS for February's sessions:

Session 1 – Wed 5th February, 10am–12.30pm

## **BUILDING A WELCOMING BELFAST: THE VISION,** MISSION, AND HISTORY OF BELFAST CITY OF SANCTUARY

The leadership team from Belfast City of Sanctuary will share the inspiring story of their organisation, their mission to make Belfast a welcoming city for everyone, and how their work supports newcomers.

https://lnkd.in/eGiCDYyn

Session 2 – Wed 12th February, 10am–12.30pm **ADDRESSING BULLYING IN SCHOOLS** 

Martina from the Education Authority (Northern Ireland) will discuss practical ways to tackle bullying and build safer school environments.

https://lnkd.in/eh-9ifaj

## Session 3 – Wed 19th February, 10am–12.30pm Session 3 – Wed 19th February, 10am–12.30pm

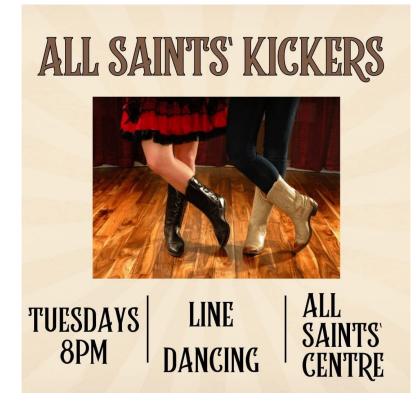
Ligia from Belfast Metropolitan College will provide an overview of the wide range of learning opportunities available.

https://lnkd.in/eBYjcMpS

Session 4 – Wed 26th February, 10am–12.30pm **GETTING INTO UNIVERSITY** 

Niamh and Sandra from Queen's University Belfast Recruitment and Admissions will explain the admissions process at Queen's University, including pathways for newcomers.

https://lnkd.in/eBM2Qjtr



# All Saints Kickers - Line dancing in Derry

# Whether you are a beginner or have danced before, you will be made very welcome amongst this fun-loving group.

The class is tailored to suit everyone, with a selection of old and new dances. This is a great opportunity to make friends and keep fit at the same time.

Everyone Welcome. When: Tuesday 8pm - 9.30pm. Where: All Saints' Centre (Glendermott Rd) Londonderry

# St Ann's Dublin recitals

# The recital series will begin once more tomorrow February 6th.

On February 6th, at 1:20 pm, Westland Trio Baroque Ensemble will perform Telemann sonatas.

The Westland Trio was co-founded in April 2023 with Naxossigned pianist Professor Lance Coburn and young cellist Chen Ensheng and violinist Junhe Qiu. The trio successfully completed concert tours. The performers at this recital will be Junhe Qiu, Ensheng Chen, and Celia Yizhen He Chu. You can find more information at <u>https://</u> <u>www.stannsrecitals.com/events/westland-trio-baroqueensemble</u>

# Perspective

# Pope Francis: 'Conversion is a lifelong journey'

During his second Jubilee Catechesis (Saturday 1 February), Pope Francis offered a reflection on the meaning of conversion, hope and the transformative power of faith, encouraging the faithful to rethink their lives within the framework of "God's dream".

Conversion, he explained is a "change of direction," that allows us to change the way we see things in our lives. It is not a one-time event but an ongoing process in which we repeatedly turn away from old ways of thinking and embrace new possibilities.

This dynamic shift in perspective, the Pope suggested, is what gives rise to hope: even in a world filled with suffering and wrongdoing, hope emerges when individuals recognise the presence of those who live differently-people whose humility and transformation captivate and inspire others, he said.

To illustrate this theme, Pope Francis highlighted the figure of Mary Magdalene who embodies the power of divine mercy. Jesus healed Mary Magdalene, restoring her dignity and purpose. Through this encounter, she was brought back into God's dream, finding new direction and meaning in her life, showing that conversion is not only about personal change but also about entering into a greater reality shaped by God's love.

"In the Gospels, the figure of Mary Magdalene stands out above all others for this. Jesus healed her with mercy (cf. Lk 8:2), and she changed: the mercy brought her into God's dreams and gave new purpose to her journey."

The Pope focused in particular on John's account of the Magdalene's meeting with the Risen Christ, drawing attention to the repeated mention of Mary "turning around". Initially, she is focused on the empty tomb, lost in grief, unable to recognise Jesus standing before her. But when she hears Him call her by name, she turns once again-this time with a new understanding. she no longer sees death, but life; no longer despair, but hope.

From this passage, the Pope said, derives a crucial lesson: that true faith requires continuous conversion, that we must remain open to seeing reality differently.

"One enters the new world by converting more than once. Our journey is a constant invitation to change perspective. The Risen One takes us into His world, step by step, on the condition that we do not claim to know everything already."

The Pope challenged to ask ourselves: "Do I know how to turn around to see things differently?" and "Do I have the desire for conversion?"

He warned that an "overconfident and proud ego prevents us from recognising the Risen Jesus" who appears in unexpected forms-in the faces of ordinary people, particularly those who are marginalised or overlooked. "Even when we weep and despair," he added, "we turn our back on Him." **Church News Ireland** 

Bringing his reflection to a close, Pope Francis invited the faithful to learn from Mary Magdalene "to turn towards life", the "real life" where the Risen Jesus has a place and mission for us, "instead of looking into the darkness of the past." In Jesus, he concluded, "everyone can say: I have a place, I am a mission!

Watch Saturday's Catechesis here: <u>www.youtube.com/</u> watch?v=XtH4I1WcUK8

# 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 <u>houstonmckelvey@mac.com</u>

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# Link in Monday through Saturday from early morning

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