

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Dublin Synagogue

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Next Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

The next leader of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland will be Rev Trevor Gribben.

Mr Gribben is currently the church's Clerk of the General Assembly and General Secretary.

He received the most votes from the Church's 19 regional presbyteries when they met independently across Ireland to elect the next moderator.

Before he takes office, the moderator-designate will be formally elected and installed by the General Assembly in Belfast this June.

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The Tandragee-born 63-year-old will be the seventh clerk to serve in the Church's highest office, the last being Dr Sam Hutchinson who was elected in 1997.



Mr Gribben said: “Having served as an ordained minister within PCI for the last 37 or so years, it really is a great honour, and a very humbling experience, to be nominated as moderator-designate.

“Although it's been my day-job over the years as clerk to ring colleagues to inform them of their nomination as moderator-designate, it was a very different experience tonight to get that phone call myself from the deputy clerk.” The other nominee was Templepatrick minister Rev Richard Kerr.

Rev Gribben received 16 votes: The Presbyteries of Armagh, Ballymena, North Belfast, East Belfast,

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Carrickfergus, Coleraine & Limavady, Derry & Donegal, Down, Dromore, Dublin & Munster, Iveagh, Monaghan, Newry, Omagh, Route, and Tyrone

Rev Kerr received three votes: Ards, South Belfast and Templepatrick.

Mr Gribben completed his formal theological studies in 1987, and was ordained in 1988 as assistant minister of Duncairn and St Enoch's Presbyterian Church in inner-city north Belfast.

Two years later, in 1990, he was called to Leckpatrick Presbyterian Church in Co Tyrone. Serving there until 1996, Mr Gribben was called to Whiteabbey Presbyterian Church in Co Antrim, where he remained for a further 12 years. The lifelong Arsenal fan enjoys watching Irish League football, becoming a Linfield season ticket holder in recent years. Cricket is another passion of his and he supports Waringstown Cricket Club.

Methodist North Western District Transformation Prayer Gathering

The Church's next Transformation Prayer Gathering is happening in the North Western District in Thomas Street Methodist Church, Portadown on Thursday 13th February, 7:30pm

On the church website below:

- View upcoming gathering dates
- Download promotional slides



- Download resources
- and get details on hosting your own gathering!

→ irishmethodist.org/living-wholeheartedly

[<https://irishmethodist.org/news/ddg-transformation-news-2024-25>]

4Corners Caring For Our Earthly Home: a truly inspiring evening of music

At Jennymount Methodist Church, we gathered for Caring For Our Earthly Home: a truly inspiring evening of music, reflection and urgent conversation.

Dr Lorna Gold challenged us to recognise the Earth as our shared "common home", reminding us that we must act collectively to protect our planet before it's too late.

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Sixth-generation fiddler & bilingual singer Clare Sands moved us with her soulful performance, weaving together language, tradition and a deep sense of home.

The atmosphere was full of passion and purpose—thank you to everyone who joined us!

Let's carry this message forward as we continue our journey through the festival.

Fáilte Ireland wants to change vacant St Andrew's Church site into a food hall

Fáilte Ireland wants to change the use of the St Andrew's Church site on Suffolk Street and turn it into a food hall, Amy Donohoe writes in the Irish Independent.

The vacant church building is owned by Fáilte Ireland and was formerly used as a tourist information centre. It has largely become known for the Molly Malone statue perched outside.

The property is almost 20,000 sq ft over three levels in the heart of Dublin city centre and adjacent to the prime shopping area of Grafton Street.

St Andrew's is a former protestant church which was originally situated on Dame Street. The building fell into disuse, and was re-founded on the present-day site in 1670.

By 1750, the building had fallen into a state of disrepair and by 1790 had completely deteriorated. In 1803, a

A Celebration of Ireland's patron saint with members of the New Irish Choir and Orchestra

NEW IRISH ARTS

Patrick

Friday 14th March, 8pm
St John's Ballyclare

Tickets: £20, available online via the QR code below or by contacting the church office at 02893 354814.



 THE UNITED PARISH
Christ Church & St John's

newirisharts.com

considerable investment was made to construct a second church on the site. This was completed in 1807, but was burned to the ground by an accidental fire in 1860.

The present-day building was constructed and consecrated in 1866. In more recent times, the building was used as The Visit Dublin Centre between 1996 and 2014.

More theological colleges in England may close

“I don’t know a theological college that does not have financial problems, enrollment issues, or some kind of existential challenge right now,” cultural commentator Krish Kandiah told Christianity Today. “It’s as bad as people are saying.”

Many institutions have closed their doors in recent years. Bangor University and the University of Sheffield shut down



their theology schools. St. John's College in Nottingham, England, shuttered in 2019. Redcliffe College dissolved in 2020. And a smattering of smaller colleges have also been boarded up. The Church of England reported at its General Synod in July that the number of potential ordinands in its theological education institutions has fallen precipitously—down 40 percent since 2019. Hundreds fewer Anglican seminarians are enrolling now than just five years ago.

Close observers don't expect the trend to reverse anytime soon.

"We are going to see more closures, mergers, and competition for a smaller pool of potential students," Kandiah said.

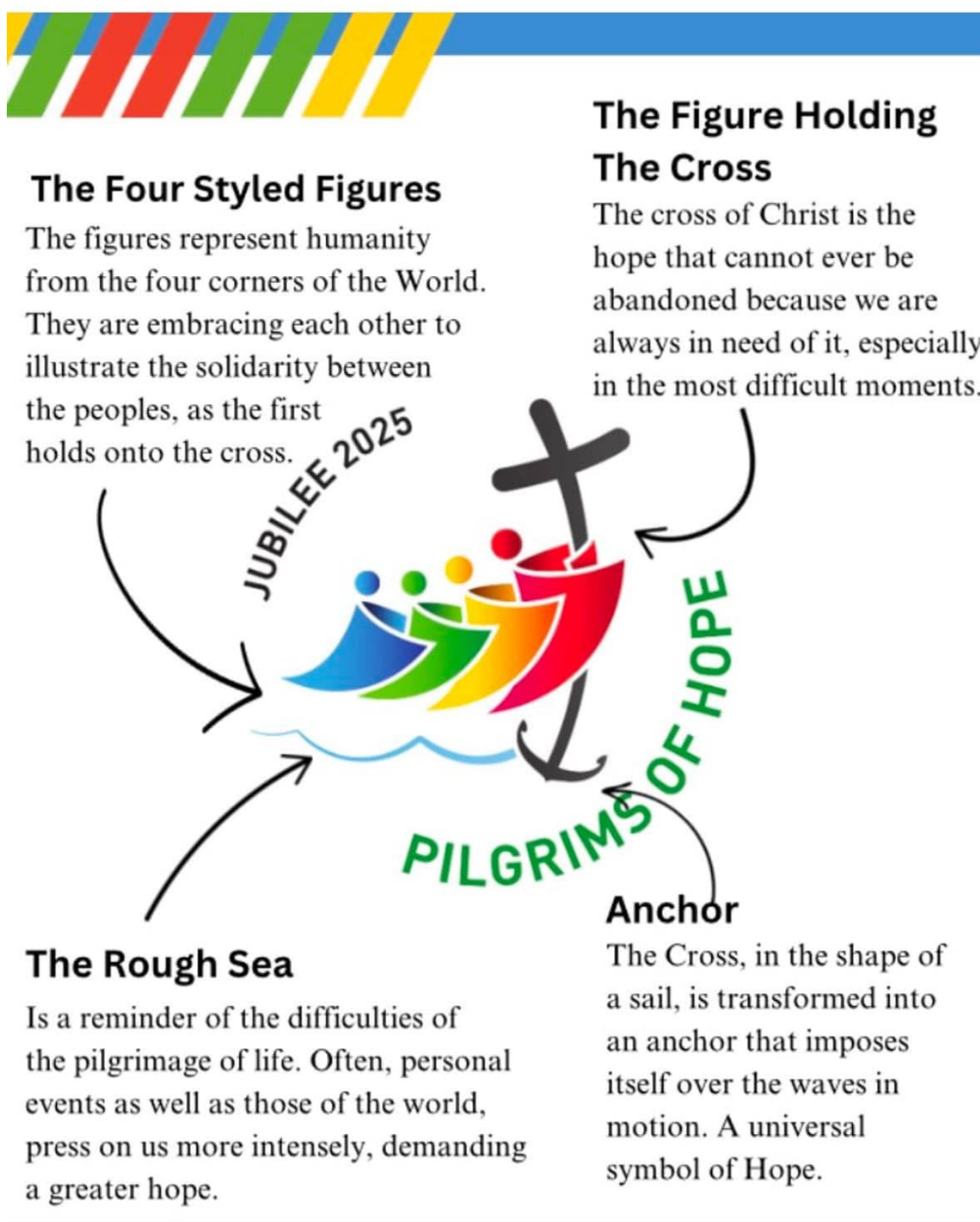
Principals, experts, and church insiders have offered a range of explanations for the dizzying downturn: People have blamed an increasingly secular society, the UK's ongoing cost-of-living crisis, and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Radio Maria opens new platform in Liverpool

Radio Maria in England has announced its expansion into Liverpool on DAB+ digital radio.

This development marks a significant milestone in Radio Maria's mission to offer spiritual nourishment, the Gospel, and a sense of community to listeners across the region.

The launch of Radio Maria on Liverpool's small-scale DAB+ platform will provide 24/7 access to Catholic programming, including daily Mass, prayers, inspiring teachings, live talk shows, and uplifting music. This expansion aims to reach homes, workplaces, and cars, connecting people of all ages to the Good News of Jesus Christ and the loving embrace of His Church.



Archbishop Malcolm McMahon of Liverpool warmly welcomed the initiative, recognizing Radio Maria's potential to serve the local community's spiritual needs and beyond.

Archbishop Malcolm said: "I am delighted to welcome Radio Maria England to the Archdiocese of Liverpool and pleased that the people of the diocese will now be able to listen, via DAB (digital radio), to such a rich variety of faith-filled programming. It is essential that the Word of God be heard not just in our churches, but in the everyday of our lives so that what we receive in the Mass bears fruit outside of it. Radio Maria is a beautiful tool in the building of a Christian culture that orients us once more to the love of God and neighbour. I fully support the work of Radio Maria England!"

The inclusion of Liverpool in Radio Maria's digital coverage is part of a broader mission to bring Catholic radio to as many people as possible across the UK. Supported entirely by listeners' prayers and donations, the station continues to grow as a vibrant, volunteer-driven ministry dedicated to evangelisation, prayer, and fellowship.

Fr Toby Lees, Priest Director of Radio Maria in England, added: "What could be better than Liverpool being top of the table at the halfway point of the season? Well, if you're an Everton fan, I imagine the answer is anything, but even if you're a Liverpool fan, we're seeking to bring a different sort of joy to the airwaves, something even better than the thrill of last-minute winner in front of the Kop, a joy more enduring and that can carry us through times of sorrow - the love of Jesus Christ. I have heard so many stories of lives transformed by Radio Maria and I look forward to hearing more from the great city of Liverpool!"

Liverpool SSDAB provider, David Duffy said: "I am delighted to have worked closely with Pierre Petrou at Radio Maria to establish this great Catholic radio station on our multiplex. As a practicing Catholic who manages the Liverpool SSDAB network, I know that there are many people across Liverpool who will benefit hugely from listening to Radio Maria."

Listeners in Liverpool can tune in via DAB+ and the Radio Maria England app, available for free on Android and iOS. For more information about Radio Maria in England, its programming, or ways to support this ministry, visit radiomariaengland.uk.

LINKS

Radio Maria: www.radiomariaengland.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/radiomariaengland

Education

Scripture Union Northern Ireland school Roadshows

Scripture Union Northern Ireland is hosting 3 local 'Roadshows' this March.

They are designed for anyone working or serving in schools to consider how we can be present as Christians in our school communities in a whole variety of ways. (The content will be the same at each gathering).

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Irish Society Primary School, Coleraine
– Thursday 6th March | 7pm - 9.30pm

Richmond Primary School, Ballygawley
– Tuesday 11th March | 7pm - 9.30pm

Ballymacash Primary School, Lisburn
– Saturday 15th March | 10am - 12.30pm

MCB needs classroom assistants

“We are hiring classroom assistants to provide assistance to support pupils with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities in mainstream classes and in school.

“As a member of staff, you will discover a celebrated tapestry of diversity, opportunity and excellence that makes Methody truly unique.

“To find out more about this role, visit our website:
<https://www.methody.org/vacancies>

Miss Heather Marshall, Vice Principal, Cairnshill Integrated Primary School

The school posted - it is with deepest regret and sadness that we announce the passing of our friend, colleague and Vice Principal, Miss Heather Marshall.

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For almost 30 years, Miss Marshall has devoted her entire teaching career to Cairnshill. She has been an integral part of the history of the school and has ensured a legacy of the highest order. Her devotion to the children in her care was second to none. Around 900 children had the pleasure of having her as their teacher with many more learning of her faith through Scripture Union.



Our school and the teaching profession has suffered a tremendous loss. Our thoughts and deepest sympathies are extended to her family and friends at this sad time.

A further announcement will be made in due course.

Cathedral Calls

Armagh's St. Patrick Festival

Armagh St. Patrick Festival promises an unforgettable celebration, from heart-pounding live music in cozy

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bars and restaurants to reflective and spiritual moments that stir the soul – there's something for everyone. And of course, plenty of good craic to go around!

Come along Sunday 9th March – Monday 17th March 2025

The Home of St. Patrick, where history and culture come alive to create an extraordinary festival experience. One of the highlights is the Vigil Walk which takes place between the two St Patrick's Cathedrals, the only city in the world to have the honour of having two Cathedrals that share the same name.

The two Cathedrals dominate the skyline and their visual impact will be remembered by anyone who visits Ireland's Ecclesiastical Capital. Explore the Ecclesiastical Trail Buildings, Gargoyles and Angels or Saint Patrick's Way: The Pilgrim walk.

Storm impact on Armagh C of I Cathedral

Thankfully the worst of the storm now seems to have passed over Armagh, the Cathedral posted...

...Our thoughts and prayers are





with all those whose homes and property have been damaged by the wind and rain. The Cathedral has not gone unscathed, as you will see from the photographs. A tree has been felled by the wind at the east end of the building, just outside the gates to the Cathedral gardens. There has also been a lot of damage to the lead on the ridge, some slates off and storm glazing broken, but all in all it could have been a lot worse.

US Hamilton College and The Royal School, Armagh Chamber Choir in concert

Join us on the 19th March St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh - Anglican - COI at 7:30 PM a fabulous FREE

CONCERT

HAMILTON COLLEGE CHOIR

from Clinton, New York, USA

Conductor: Dr Charlotte Botha



SHARED PERFORMANCE WITH THE ROYAL SCHOOL CHAMBER CHOIR
DIRECTED BY A. BOYD

Wednesday 19th March 7:30 PM

St Patrick's Cathedral
Cathedral Close, 43 Abbey St, Armagh

Hamilton
COLLEGE CHOIR



FREE ADMISSION PLEASE JOIN US!

Please email performancesbooking@gmail.com
for information and seats reservation

**concert by Hamilton College and The Royal School,
Armagh Chamber Choir**

reserve your seat Eventbrite or email us
performancesbooking@gmail.com

Clergy and ministry

C of I Clergy Couples Retreat

**The
Marriage
Council will**

be holding a Clergy Couples Retreat again this year in the Tullamore Court Hotel from Thursday 6th to Saturday 8th March, with guest facilitators Dr Alan and Mrs Pauline Wilson.

The event aims to provide a relaxing short break away, and Dr Alan and Mrs Pauline Wilson will facilitate several sessions sharing stories, and providing practical insights into navigating marriage which we hope will help couples who attend.

The cost of the break will be €200 per couple. If you would like to reserve a space, please contact Aisling Sheridan at aisling.sheridan@rcbcoi.org



Pastoral Visitors Course in Armagh diocese

A Diocese of Armagh Pastoral Visitors Course began this week at Kildress Church Hall and running for 6 weeks.

The facilitator said - Looking forward to meeting all those who are being called to serve God in this way in their individual parishes and sharing together over the next six weeks.

**Webinars,
music,
resources,
broadcasts,
and books**

**Seeds
Children's
Ministry,
Derry**



“We are having our first Sensory Play session on Saturday 15th February from 1:30pm - 3:00pm in The Acorn Centre, St. Peter's, Londonderry.”

Sensory Play

Drop in for an informal sensory play session thinking about God's Love for us.

Children must be accompanied by a responsible adult at all times.

**Saturday 15th February
1:30pm - 3:00pm
The Acorn Centre,
St. Peter's Church of Ireland**



This is a drop in session where families can explore the theme of Gods love for us using different sensory play activities.

Children must be accompanied by a responsible adult at all times.

Please register for the event by completing this form - <https://forms.gle/c9uwB65ZnzXLMr14A>

In the media

East Clare churches badly damaged by storm winds - The Clare Champion

[\[https://clarechampion.ie/east-clare-churches-badly-damaged-by-storm-winds/\]](https://clarechampion.ie/east-clare-churches-badly-damaged-by-storm-winds/)

Mayo church closed due to storm damage - Connaught Telegraph

Holy Trinity Church in Westport is currently closed until further notice due to damage to the ceiling caused by Storm Éowyn.

[\[https://www.con-telegraph.ie/2025/02/04/mayo-church-closed-due-to-storm-damage/\]](https://www.con-telegraph.ie/2025/02/04/mayo-church-closed-due-to-storm-damage/)

Tipperary church renovations will cost €600,000 according to parish priest - Nenagh Live

St. John the Baptist church in Cashel will need serious renovations due to structural damage from moisture

[\[https://www.ireland-live.ie/news/nenagh-live/1718393/tipperary-church-renovations-will-cost-600-000-according-to-parish-priest.html\]](https://www.ireland-live.ie/news/nenagh-live/1718393/tipperary-church-renovations-will-cost-600-000-according-to-parish-priest.html)

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

Church News Ireland

www.churchnewsireland.org

Link in Monday through Saturday from early morning

Please recommend to your friends

