

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Ulster organists in harmony

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Ulster organists in harmony

The Ulster Society of Organists and Choirmasters held its AGM in St Cedma's, Parishes of Larne, Glynn and Raloo on Saturday 13 January 2024

Prior to the business, Dr Mark McKinty (Director of Music at St Cedma's) welcomed those present, highlighted the previous USOC visit to Larne, and introduced the 1881 Conacher Organ (the oldest organ in Larne, having been inaugurated at services on Sunday 18th September 1881). Dr Joe McKee OBE then gave a short recital on the instrument (Front page photo).

USOC visited St Cedma's for Evensong on Saturday 24th April 1954, so the AGM marked almost 70 years since that



event. The late George Beattie was the organist on the day and afterwards entertained those present with tea in the Laharna Hotel. Ms Patricia McKinley-Hutchinson (Mr Beattie's daughter), who was present at the AGM, was a member of the choir at the 1954 Evensong.

The current President (a 2-year term) is Matthew

Owens (Photo left). Matthew is Music Director of The Ulster Consort, Northern Ireland's newest professional vocal and instrumental ensemble; Conductor of the Belfast City Chorus; and Associate Director of the Grand Rapids Choir of Men & Boys in Michigan, USA. He was Organist and Master of the Music at St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh (Episcopal) (1999-2004), Organist and Master of the Choristers at Wells Cathedral (2005-2019), and Director of Music of Belfast Cathedral (2019-2022).

The President is joined at the officer table by President-Elect Alf Casement (Music Director, Gilnahirk Presbyterian Church), Hon. Secretary Michael Tregenna (Director of

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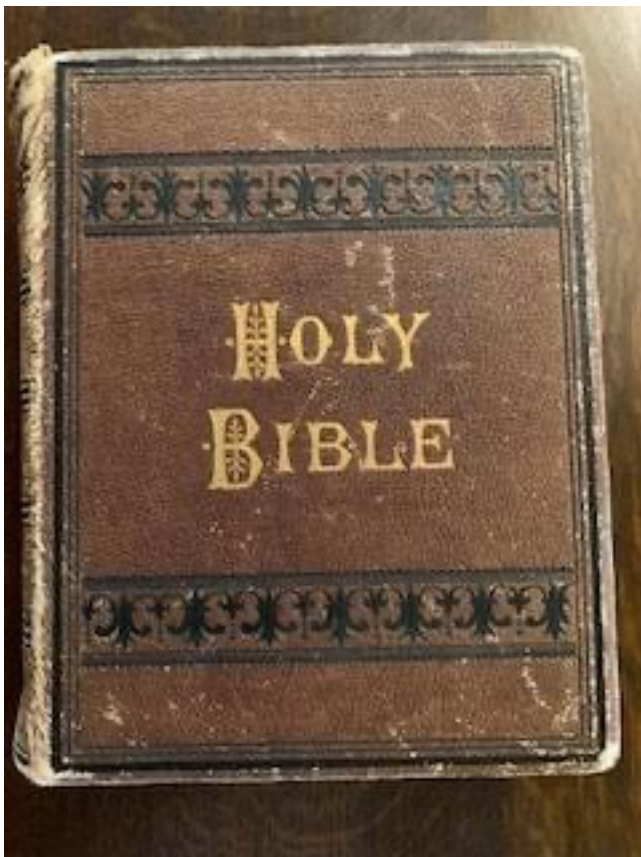
Music, Parish of St Paul and St Barnabas, Belfast), Hon. Treasurer Dr Mark McKinty (Director of Music, St Cedma's), assisted by a committee.

Following the AGM, members attended a reception in Larne Town Hall hosted by the Mayor of Mid and East Antrim Borough Council, Ald. Gerardine Mulvenna, followed by a meal in Chekkers Winebar.

The Society looks forward to a busy year ahead.

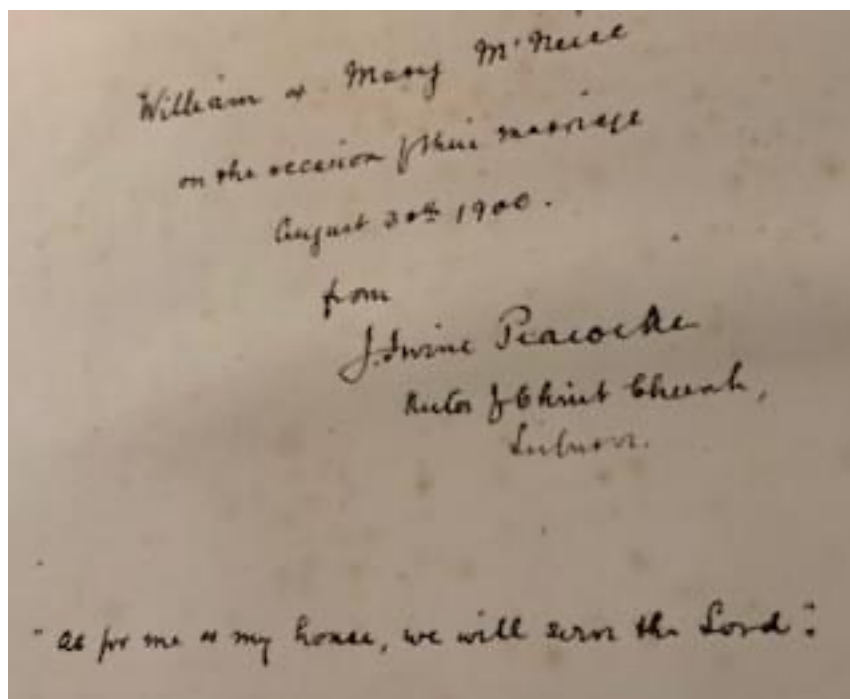
People and places

Australian search for family of Lisburn wedding Bible



Lisburn Family History Society have recently received a request from a lady in Australia. A Bible has come into her possession, and she would very much like to 'rehome' it.

William McNeice married Mary Wilson Scott on 30th August 1900 in Christ Church, Lisburn. The Bible was presented to them by the Rector at the time, J



Irvine Peacock. William was a merchant tailor in Castle Street, Lisburn. "We know the couple had two children - William Hamilton Scott McNeice and Margaret Eliza Carson McNeice but have been unable to find any direct living descendants".

If you know of anyone who may be connected to this family and who might be interested in 'rehoming' the Bible, please contact the secretary of Lisburn Family History Society at - lisburn@nifhs.org.

C of I youth explore mental health, young people, faith and church

Derry & Raphoe youth council representatives report they had a fantastic weekend at the C of I Youth Forum in the Dromantine Conference Centre. They gathered with young people from dioceses all across the Church of Ireland to continue exploring mental health, young people, faith and church.



New friendships were made, thoughts explored and so much fun was had all together. Admiration for the young people who stepped out in faith to take on this opportunity.

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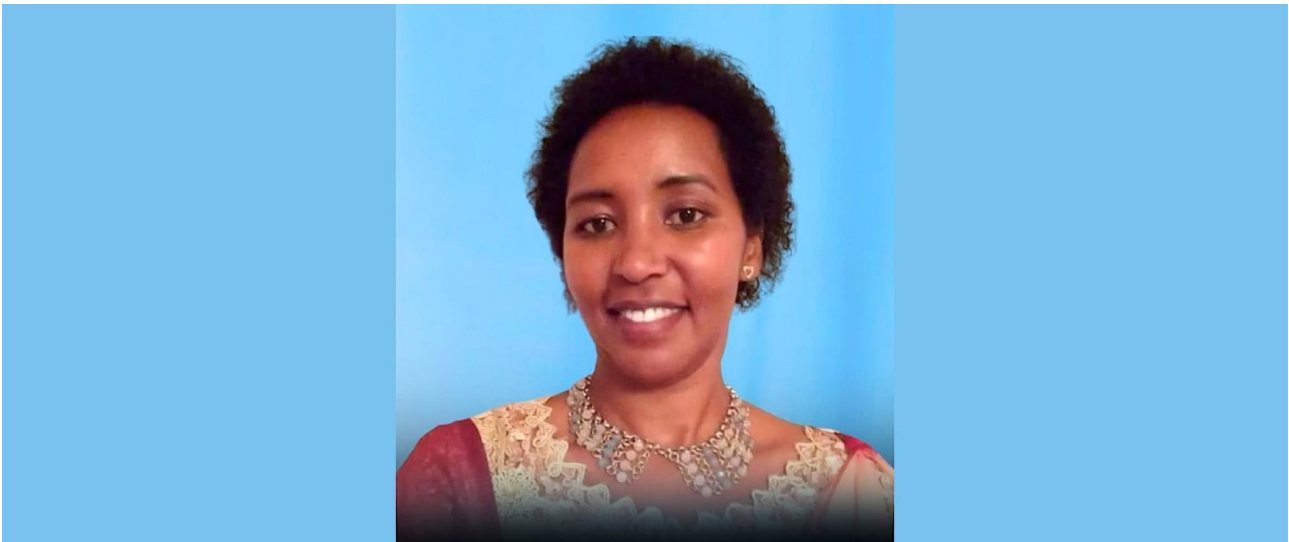
St George's Brass Band raised the roof

St George and St Thomas in Dublin reports - “What a joy and treat it was to have St George's Brass Band raising the roof as they led worship last Sunday. And a huge thanks to the Church team for the delicious refreshments for afterwards”.

+Mary Munyangaju of Bird of Paradise Ministries

Mary Charlotte Munyangaju, (1964–2023) died on Christmas morning at Medanta Hospital in India after a long battle with cancer.

Mary was co–founder with her husband Jerome of the charity Bird of Paradise Ministries (BPMR) – a ministry to elderly, homeless people in Kigali, Rwanda.



Mary was totally dedicated to this ministry and, with Jerome, opened their home in Kigali as the first residence for the charity. Before moving to take responsibility for the Charity In Rwanda,

Mary and Jerome lived and ministered in N. Ireland for many years. In 1995 Jerome was appointed by the Church of Ireland Board of Overseas Mission as a Mission Resource person for a period of three years. Initially based in Knockbreda Parish, Jerome served a curacy in Bangor Abbey, before being appointed as Rector of Killyleagh Parish where he ministered for 15 years.

It was during their time in Killyleagh that Mary's vision for the elderly orphans in Kigali began to take root. She opened a charity shop in Downpatrick to begin fundraising and (BPMP) was born.

Mary was greatly loved by all who knew her. She cared for everyone and ministered to their needs, always available to pray and encourage.

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During her illness, spent mostly in India with Jerome at her side, she continued to praise God for all that he had done for her and believed that her future was secure in His hands.

Mary's friends and supporters had been praying for a miracle, wanting so much for her to be healed and remain with us, but her suffering has ended and she now rejoices in the presence of the Saviour whom she loved, healed and whole.

On Christmas Day Jerome wrote:

"It's with sadness that I let you and friends know of the death of Mary, at the same time comforted by the knowledge that she is with her Saviour Jesus, whom she loved and served.

Mary will be missed more than words can describe".

Revd Bobbie Moore, Mission Director, travelled to Kigali to represent the BPMR family at Mary's Funeral Service held on Friday, 5th January 2024. During the Service Bobbie had the opportunity to bring greetings from Jerome and Mary's second home here in Ireland.

Mary is survived by her husband Jerome, their children Nziza with Ashten, Vera and Jo Grace, grandchildren Jacob and Amelia. She will be dearly missed by her many friends and all who knew her.

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A service of thanksgiving and celebration for Mary's life and ministry will be held later in the year. Details will be circulated in due course.

With thanks to Revd Bobbi Moore

Raphoe Cathedral service celebrates ministry of Readers

Readers from as far away as Castlerock and Ballyshannon, and many parishes in between, on Sunday evening converged on Raphoe for a Service of Holy Communion for current and serving Readers, many of whom had led services that morning.

The Service was led by the Dean of Raphoe, Very Rev Liz Fitzgerald, and organised to acknowledge and celebrate the Readers' contribution to ministry in the Diocese of Derry and Raphoe.

The Dean was joined by Bishop Andrew Forster (who preached the Sermon); the Diocesan Warden of Readers, Rev Canon Derek Quinn; Rev Canon Robert Clarke (who is responsible for training Parish Readers); the Archdeacon of Derry, Ven. Robert Miller; and the Rural Dean for Raphoe,





Rev Canon David Crooks. Many clergy from both dioceses were in the congregation.

Bishop Andrew began his sermon by acknowledging the many gifts Readers share in churches here, week in and week out. “I want to say thank you to all of you for your commitment, for your love, for your energy, for your spiritual depth, for the life that you’re bringing to parishes across the length and breadth of this Diocese because of your ministry as Parish Readers and Lay Readers. I want to say thank you. And in saying thank you, I hope you realise both the importance and the significance of what you do – the importance of what you do in leading the people of God in worship, and the significance of what that means not just for the people in the pew but in the wider community. I want to say thank you tonight for all that you do and all that you continue to do. And as you use your gifts – just as our Gospel reading explained – as you use those gifts, it seems to me that God increases those gifts, uses them all the



more, allows us to reach out in even greater ways in ministry for him. So, thank you.

“I honestly believe,” the preacher continued, “[that] it’s the most wonderful thing in the world to be a follower of Jesus Christ, and it’s the most wonderful privilege in the world to serve him. Now, we can serve him with many different functions in many different places, but tonight I want to give thanks to God for all of you, for how you serve him in the context of liturgical ministry, leading, reading, praying and preaching. Thank you.”

Bishop Andrew told the congregation that what they were called to be were people “who shared the story”. It was like a modern-day page turner, he said. It was exciting, It was interesting. We wanted to see what happens. “For you and me → for all of us in ministry – I think God calls us to be



people who ‘turn the page’, who keep the story going, who share the story in the world around us, because we know it’s a life-giving story; we know it’s transformative; we know it’s a story that is exciting and wonderful, and a story that the world needs. And in your ministry, as a Parish Reader, or as a Lay Reader, or for those of us who are ordained, never simply think of it as just about making sure a service happens. What you’re doing is making sure the story is shared, the story is told – the story that brings life and love and hope and peace and mercy into a needy world – we keep the story going.”

The Bishop drew the congregation’s attention to a verse in the New Testament reading from 1 Corinthians 14: ‘If you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in the gifts that build up the church.’ “Now, all of us are in leadership in the church, and our great call is to build up the church – the

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church of which Jesus says I will build my church and the gates of hell will not stand against it. But yet there is much that seems to pull down the building of the church nowadays. We're smaller. We're smaller in numbers – we know that – that's why we need you so much. And sometimes when we're smaller, we feel it's just about holding on. We've a secular culture around us that in many ways wants to demean faith or, if not demean faith, ignore it completely. We live in a world that is suspicious of authority – sometimes for the right reasons – but has become suspicious of the authority of Scripture, for instance. Scripture says when the foundations shake, what will the righteous do? Well, try to excel in the gifts that build up the church.”



Bishop Andrew focused on three themes in his sermon: place, privilege and power. Place matters, he said. Columba saw the importance of place, building monasteries right across our Diocese – places that became mission stations

sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ within those communities. “Place matters. The places that you serve matter. They’re important to God. They’re important to you. I really want us to recapture that Columban vision, to allow Columba’s spiritual DNA that is within us as a Diocese to come to the fore, that we would see all our parish churches as mission stations, places bringing light and hope and love into the community. That’s what you do.”

Often, the Bishop said, when he thanked Readers for leading a service, they responded by saying it was a privilege. “And it is a privilege, isn’t it?” he said. “It is a privilege to lead the people of God, to pray with the people of God, to open God’s Word with the family of God.” Bishop Andrew said he would hazard a “fairly accurate guess” that the reason why the Diocesan and Parish Readers present were involved in “this great privilege of leading God’s people in prayer and in praise” was because they had been touched, blessed and overwhelmed by love – by the love of God, and by how his love had accepted them and won them over, had forgiven them and helped them and been gracious to them. “What a privilege it is to experience that love and then what a privilege it is to share that love in these places that matter, in these places that count, in these mission stations right across our Diocese.”

How do they do it, the Bishop asked? “We do it in the power of the Spirit...I want to tell you, whether you think it or not, you are gifted by the Holy Spirit of God. You might feel I don’t deserve those gifts or I didn’t ask for that gift – maybe, in fact, I didn’t even want that gift – but you are gifted by God. Ask God for his gifts so that you will build up the church...Gifts given by God – that’s what will make the

difference, even in a culture that seems to turn its back on the Church. We will be found to be faithful because the place matters, because we understand the privilege, and because God empowers us through his Spirit to serve him.”

Bishop Andrew had further words of gratitude, this time for Canon Derek Quinn and Canon Robert Clarke for all that they continued to do to see lay ministry grow and expand in our Diocese. And he thanked Dean Fitzgerald for organising Sunday evening’s service.



**COMING TO A VENUE
NEAR YOU THIS WEEK...**

FRIDAY, FEB 2
BANGOR

BALYCROCHAN PRES
19:00

SATURDAY, FEB 3
ARDS

MOVILLA PRES
18:30

SUNDAY, FEB 4
BELFAST

THE HUB
19:00

New Life
CHOIR

Music for the service was provided by the Cathedral Organist, Renee Goudie, and by the men and women of the Cathedral Choir. And afterwards the congregation enjoyed fellowship and light refreshments at the back of the church.

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Unbounded Love - Methodist Lent reflections

God's love doesn't stay in the lines

Charles Wesley's famous hymn Love Divine, All Loves Excelling (Singing the Faith 503) talks about Jesus as 'unbounded love' – a kind of love that cannot be contained, that works in our lives and in our world to free us and heal us. Unbounded Love is the theme of the Lent campaign of the Methodist Church in 2024 – holding together our commitments to be a justice-seeking church, and a people who experience and proclaim the good news of God's uncontainable love.

What to expect?

A range of resources that connect the Gospel readings from the Sunday lectionary throughout Lent to weekly themes, each one a line lifted from "Love divine, all loves excelling". The themes are:

Week 1 - “Unbounded love”: Jesus’ baptism and wilderness experience – God’s love bursts the barriers of heaven, and then bursts into the realms of darkness.

**UNBOUNDED
LOVE**

**God's love
doesn't stay
in the lines**

40 daily email
deliveries of
love in Lent

Find out more here or by visiting
methodist.org.uk/UnboundedLove

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The Methodist Church

Week 2 - “Visit us with thy salvation”: Losing our life (psyche) to find it – the ways we attempt to insulate ourselves from God’s love.

Week 3 - “Pure and spotless let us be”: Turning the tables in the Temple – corporate religious attempts to boundary God’s love.

Week 4 - “Finish then thy new creation”: God’s unbounded love for the cosmos.

Week 5 - “Changed from glory into glory”: Like a seed that has to die before it bears fruit, death is no barrier to God’s love.

Week 6 - “Till we cast our crowns before thee”: As Jesus entered Jerusalem the people responded by taking off their cloaks. What’s our equivalent?

Holy Week - “Lost in wonder, love, and praise!”: As Jesus becomes bound by his opponents, will God’s love stay bound?

What will be available?

For individuals

Forty daily discipleship prompts, delivered straight to your email inbox every day of Lent, excluding Sundays. Daily emails will include Bible studies, creative activities and challenges to take an action.

For Churches

A poster to display outside your church during Lent, inviting passers-by to consider the message of Unbounded Love.

Sign up for the daily reflection emails during Lent!

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Discover a rhythm of reflection as we explore Charles Wesley's famous hymn 'Love Divine, All Loves Excelling'.

Join to experience and proclaim the good news of God's uncontainable love.

methodist.org.uk/our-faith/worship/lent-and-easter/unbounded-love/.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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