

Church News Ireland

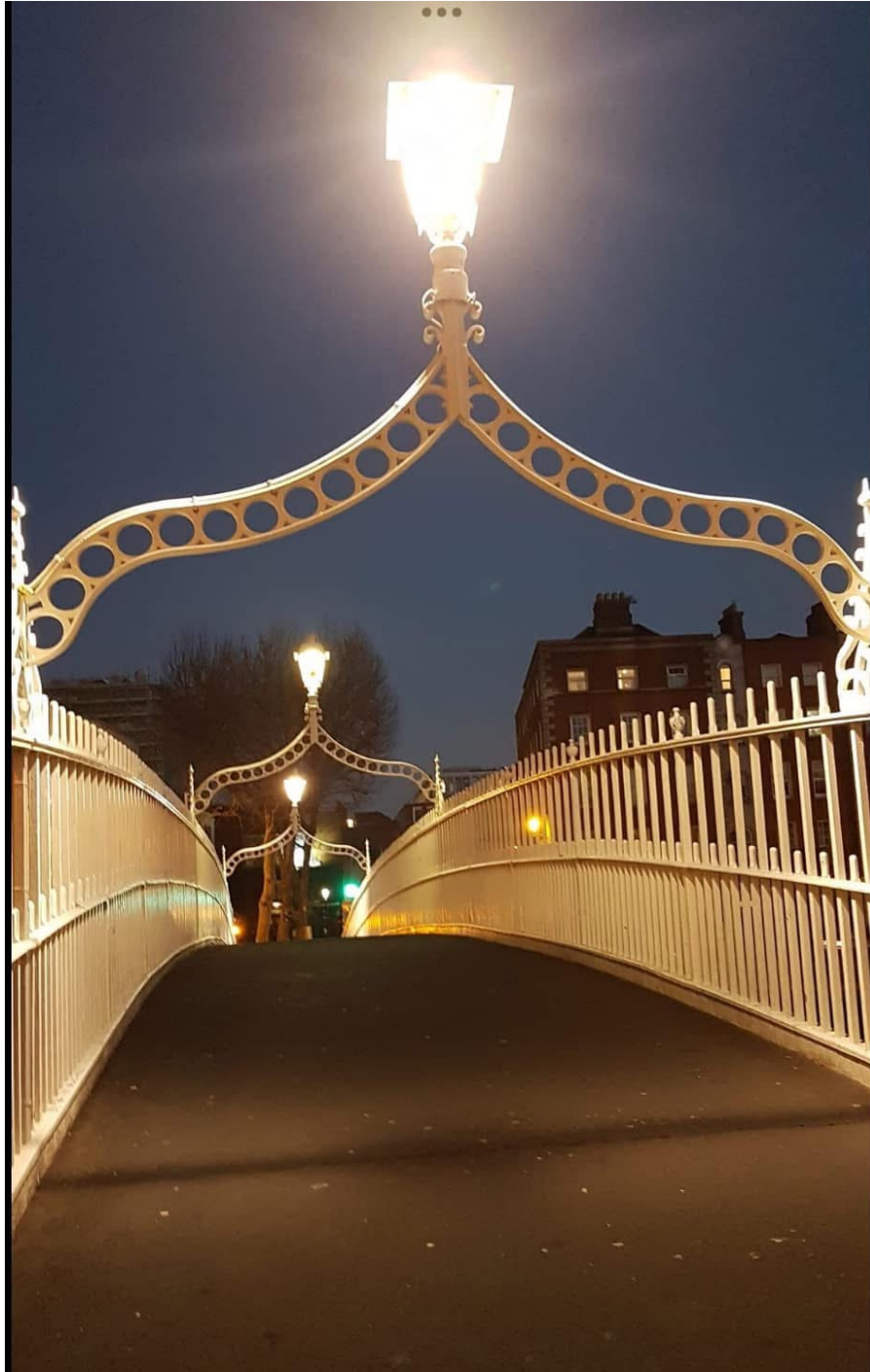


Image of the day – Twin city Ha'penny Bridge

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Short reading and a prayer daily on this site

Image of the day –Twin city Ha’penny Bridge



Colin Wilson writing of Harland and Wolf recounts the refurbishing of the Ha’Penny Bridge

Back in the early 2000’s the Harland and Wolf Yard in Belfast was in a bad way after the two Drill Ships were completed but we did get a contract to refurbish the Ha’Penny Bridge in Dublin, earlier known as The Wellington Bridge after the Duke. (*Battle of Waterloo with defeat of Napoleon 1815*)

The name was changed to reflect the toll you paid to cross over. Made of cast iron the bridge was erected in 1816 and was the oldest pedestrian crossing over the River Liffey. So 190 odd years later it was in need of a lot of T & C from H & W.

The job turned out to be a nightmare as the deck was every shape and some of the burners got lead poisoning as a

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result of the fact that the railings we removed were jointed into the structure using molten lead.

However the job was successfully completed to Dublin City Council's satisfaction, and from what I was told the men had a good old time in Dublin.

News



Thank you Tesco says East Belfast Mission

**The Methodist Church's East Belfast Mission writes -
We want to take a moment to say a massive thank you**

January 7, 2025

to Grant, the manager at Knocknagoney Tesco, for his incredible support leading up to Christmas.

Grant has been an absolute star, helping us at EBM in so many ways - providing bags, toys, allowing us to bulk buy for our "Dinner in a Box" initiative, and even donating extra items. His generosity has been invaluable and has made such a huge difference for us and the community.

Because of this amazing support, we were able to:

- Prepare and distribute 1,300 bags of food.
- Provide 80 family Christmas dinners.
- Help 45 families with toys and 40 families with Christmas dinners.

Thank you!

Cathedral Calls

Carols of the Epiphany in Belfast

On Sunday past, 5th January, at 3.30pm the Choral Music in Belfast Cathedral included:

Here we bring new water - Benjamin Britten
No small wonder - Paul Edwards
The Three Kings - Peter Cornelius
What Child is this? - Thomas Hewitt Jones,

There also were favourite Epiphany readings and carols for congregational singing, along with John Milton's poem "On the morning of Christ's Nativity".



*A new member of the
Chapter of Kilkenny
Where the doorway of
the Deanery was
suitably ascribed.*





Those attending the service of Epiphany music in St Columb's Cathedral, Derry were able to view and admire this work made earlier this year by an artist in residence from locally died wool

Clergy and ministry

New Parish Reader for the Ardstraw Group in County Tyrone

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On the 2nd Sunday of Christmas and the first Sunday of the New Year, the picturesque location of Baronscourt Parish Church was the venue for the Commissioning Service of a new Parish Reader for the Ardstraw Group of Parishes in County Tyrone.



The Deacon Assistant in Ardstraw Parish, Rev Sean McClafferty, commissioned Mr Aaron Warriner as a Parish Reader, in the presence of the congregation and a host of visitors who came to support the service.

Rev McClafferty presented Aaron with his Certificate of Appointment and a Book of Common Prayer as a symbol of his office. Parish Reader, Anne Murphy, also presented Aaron with a Presentation Bible to mark the occasion.

In his words of congratulation and welcome to the new Parish Reader, Rev McClafferty said, "It is a pleasure to see a young man step out in faith with a desire to serve God, his church and the parish. Lean upon God, seek his face in all things and He will direct your path." Diocese of Derry and Raphoe.

Minister urges elderly facing choice between food or heat to seek help in cold

Rev Mairisine Stanfield, a clergywoman who started the first 'warm bank' in Northern Ireland, has urged older people struggling to heat their homes during the ongoing cold snap to swallow their pride and seek help if they need it - Brett Campbell writes in the Belfast Telegraph.

It comes as the head of a charity for the elderly warned that plummeting temperatures could have serious consequences for pensioners.

Rev Mairisine Stanfield and her husband Rev David Stanfield began opening up First Presbyterian Church Bangor in 2022 to mitigate the impact of soaring energy costs during the cost-of-living crisis — the hub on Main Street is open three days a week.

“We've made space available and will probably do something for the week of this cold spell,” Mairisine told the Belfast Telegraph.

“We always make sure soup and wheaten bread is available and there is always tea, coffee and biscuits.

“If anyone comes in who has an obvious need we will help them how we can and put them in touch with the relevant agencies.”

The church minister is prepared for a surge in the number of people availing of the free heat and hot drinks, but said it's hard to know if there will be one.

“Older people are very proud,” Mairisine said.

“My message to all of them would be 'please don't allow pride to get in the way if anyone can help you'.”

The church is open from 10am to 4pm on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays to help those who are feeling the chill and it is also open to everyone on Wednesdays for scones, tea and coffee.

“We have been doing the warm welcome space for a few years now and it used to be five days a week,” Mairisine explained.

“One of the things we have found is that people actually come because of loneliness — that has been a revelation for us — and they have found a community.

“A number of older people have been coming regularly, but also a large group of university students.

“But I wouldn't be surprised if the problem is much bigger than we are seeing, I think it could be greater than we realise.”

Last week, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) warned the icy blast could put the elderly at risk of death as it issued cold weather health alerts in England with those aged 65 and over, or those with health conditions, most at risk.

Age UK said the UK Government's decision to limit the winter fuel allowance to only the poorest pensioners will be put “into sharp relief” by the cold spell.

The chief executive of the charity's NI branch has urged older people “to do all they can to keep warm” and take care of themselves.

Linda Robinson said it is understandable that people may think they should cut back on heating or food, but warned that prolonged exposure to cold temperatures could have a serious impact on older people's health.

“Having plenty of hot food and drinks throughout the day can help keep the health risks at bay, as can taking simple precautions such as wrapping up warm when going outside and sleeping with the windows closed at night,” she added.

“[But] we all have a part to play in looking out for our older relatives, friends and neighbours.

“Offering to bring some shopping or picking up medicines from the pharmacy can be a great help. And the simple act of a phone call or a visit can make a real difference.”

Welby must ask to officiate services as he leaves post

Archbishop of Canterbury officially quits at the end of today, after resignation over Church abuse scandal, the Daily Telegraph reported yesterday January 6.

Justin Welby will have to seek special permission to officiate as a priest after his tenure as Archbishop of Canterbury comes to an end.

Archbishop Welby will officially quit the role at the end of today, almost two months after announcing his resignation over failures in handling a Church of England abuse scandal.

Under Church rules, when a priest leaves office or retires, they may not officiate at services or act as a priest until they have been granted permission to officiate by a bishop.

Former archbishops are believed to have been given such permission, but it remains to be seen whether any bishop would grant the same to Archbishop Welby so soon after his resignation over a safeguarding scandal.

A source told The Telegraph: “It would be up to them [the bishop]”.

An independent review last year concluded that the barrister and Christian camp leader John Smyth, thought to have been the most prolific serial abuser to be associated with

the Church, might have been brought to justice had Archbishop Welby formally reported him to police in 2013.

The archbishop has made few public appearances since mid-November, and did not give the traditional Christmas Day sermon from Canterbury Cathedral.

While in his initial resignation statement on Nov 12 he said that he was stepping down “in sorrow with all victims and survivors of abuse”, he had to issue an apology later that month following his final speech in the House of Lords.

On that occasion, he was accused of making light of serious safeguarding failures in the Church, with an abuse survivor branding the speech – which referenced a 14th-century beheading and prompted laughter from some peers – “tone deaf”.

In recent weeks, a major charity, The Children’s Society, also rejected a Christmas donation from Archbishop Welby, saying that accepting it “would not be consistent with the principles and values that underpin our work”.

Archbishop Welby will spend today privately at his London residence, Lambeth Palace, attending a lunchtime Eucharist and later a service of Evensong.

It is during the latter that he will lay down his bishop’s crozier – a ceremonial long staff – in a symbolic act that marks the official end of his ministry as Archbishop of Canterbury.

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From tomorrow, most of the official functions normally held by the Archbishop of Canterbury will be delegated to the Most Rev Stephen Cottrell, the Archbishop of York, while some will go to Dame Sarah Mullally, the Bishop of London.

The diocesan functions will be carried out by the Rt Rev Rose Hudson-Wilkin, the Bishop of Dover.

The Archbishop of York has also faced calls to resign over his handling of a separate abuse case.

But appearing to reject those calls in recent weeks, he has pledged to “do what I can” to bring about independent scrutiny of safeguarding in the Church.

The process to replace Archbishop Welby is expected to take months, with an announcement about his successor possible in autumn.

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

A Service for the feast of Epiphany from C of E

The C of E service on Sunday for the feast of Epiphany and a blessing of chalk was from St Stephen with St John, Westminster led by Rev Graham Buckle.

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This service focussed on the wise men and featured a blessing of chalk with some familiar doors. Also taking part were some students from the Burdett-Coutts & Townshend CE Primary School.

This weekly online service is live on Sundays from 9am on the C of E website, Facebook or YouTube . It is available for playback immediately after as well.



Not able to get to Church? See the Methodist Church of the Living Stream

The Methodist Church in GB writes - “We have an online service where everyone is welcome. Just click on the link below:

“Our Sunday Service: Offers online worship services via Zoom, providing an interactive and interpersonal experience

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with hymns, prayers, and readings. Open to all, with no commitment or church membership required.

Zoom Sunday Service @ 10.30 am GMT

Everybody is welcome, just ctrl/click on the below link.

For further information, contact Colin at

info@churchlivingstream.co.uk

Website <https://churchlivingstream.co.uk/>

THE CHALKING OF THE DOORS

THE CROSSES STAND FOR CHRIST

20 + C + M + B + 25

CASPER, MELCHOIR, & BALTHAZAR

THE CALENDAR YEAR

THE LETTERS HAVE A TWO-FOLD SIGNIFICANCE:
C, M, AND B ARE THE INITIALS FOR THE TRADITIONAL NAMES OF THE MAGI

BUT THEY ARE ALSO AN ABBREVIATION OF THE FOLLOWING LATIN BLESSING:
CHRISTUS MANISONEM BENEDICAT
"MAY CHRIST BLESS THIS HOUSE"



Heritage

Captain Francis Fowke

Captain Francis Fowke (1823-1865) was the architect that designed the Royal Albert Hall. He was born in Ballysillan, North Belfast.

His other works include the 1862 International Exhibition hall in London, the National Gallery of Ireland, Royal Museum of Scotland, National History museum, London and parts of the Victoria & Albert museum, London. He studied at The Royal School, Dungannon, County Tyrone, and the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich. He received his training as an engineer at the Royal Military Academy in Woolwich, London.

He soon became known for his inventiveness and ingenuity, which he exercised even as a young subaltern in Bermuda.

His first architectural work was the Raglan Barracks in Devonport, Plymouth. This led to some interesting commissions. For example, he helped to superintend the machinery section of the Paris Universal Exhibition of 1855, and received the Legion of Honour for his work there. This work also brought him into contact with Henry Cole, and he became an Inspector for the newly-formed Department of Science and Art in London in 1857. He was soon supervising the buildings to be put up in South Kensington.

It was the beginning of a high-profile career in gallery and museum design, facilitated by Prince Albert's preference for working with Royal Engineers and builders rather than architects. Sadly, Fowke died, apparently of overwork, without seeing some of the biggest projects completed.

Nevertheless he had made some unique contributions to the architecture of his time. His collaboration with the decorative artist Godfrey Sykes "led to the exploration and use of innovative materials such as terracotta" . He was also important for his innovations in gallery lighting and ventilation. In his tribute to him, Cole said, "England has lost a man who felt the spirit of his age, and was daring enough to venture beyond the beaten path of conventionalism." In particular, Cole felt that Fowke "was solving the problem of the decorative use of iron, and by appreciating the spirit both of the Gothic and Renaissance architects, was on the threshold of introducing a novel style of architecture when, alas! death, at the early age of forty-two years, has cut short his promising career" (qtd in "Captain Francis Fowke [1823-1865](#)").

[\[https://victorianweb.org/art/architecture/fowke/index.html\]](https://victorianweb.org/art/architecture/fowke/index.html)

In the media

Jimmy Carter first US president to host a Pope at the White House



Jimmy Carter: a lifelong Christian and the first US president to host a Pope at the White House - Thomas Edwards writes in The Catholic Herald

Jimmy Carter, remembered as both a transformative leader and a tireless advocate for peace, has died at his home in Plains, Georgia. Born the year Vladimir Lenin died, he was the first US president to be born in a hospital and the first to

live to 100. His life was remarkable, even for a US president.

He led the country as a member of the Democratic Party from 1977 to 1981, serving just one term in office before being defeated by Republican Ronald Reagan in one of the largest landslides in US history.

Carter, a lifelong Baptist, stood in contrast to Catholic teaching in many areas. A vocal proponent of the ordination of women to the priesthood, Carter described the Catholic Church's decision to only ordain men as discriminating "against women in a very abusive fashion". In 2000, when the Southern Baptist Convention voted to maintain its prohibition on female ordination, Carter wrote to some 75,000 Baptists, stating: "I have finally decided that, after 65 years, I can no longer be associated with the Southern Baptist Convention."

However, Carter remains arguably the most Christian president of the United States, with his faith informing much of his actions.

Born on a peanut farm without electricity, marrying his sister's friend after graduating from the US Naval Academy, and becoming a deacon at his local Baptist church, Carter's early life exemplified resilience and strong family values—qualities that later shaped his approach to leadership and public service.

In 1966, the same year he lost the Democratic primary for the Georgia gubernatorial election, Carter helped Billy Graham organise an evangelistic outreach programme in

Americus, Georgia. When Graham initially suggested the idea to community leaders in the city, he faced difficulty finding support, as he required events organised by his ministry to be racially integrated. Carter, already a long-time advocate for racial equality, had no such reservations, though he ended up organising the event in an abandoned school basement because he could not find a local church willing to host it. He later became an honorary chairman of the Billy Graham crusade.

Throughout his political career and on his path to the White House, Carter never shied away from his Christian faith. After Watergate and Vietnam, he was seen by many as a refreshingly principled politician. During his Inaugural Address in 1977, he quoted a passage from Micah, encouraging himself and others “to walk humbly with thy God”. In 1978, he negotiated the Camp David Accords, two political agreements signed by Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, which led to the 1979 Egypt-Israel peace treaty. After the agreements were signed, Carter turned to the leaders and said, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God” (Matthew 5:9).

On October 6, 1979, during Pope John Paul II’s six-day tour of the US, Carter greeted the pontiff at the White House, becoming the first US president to do so. When the two met, they agreed to speak not as diplomats but as Christian brothers, with much of their conversation centring on human rights.

But, perhaps more than any other president, Carter will be remembered for his post-presidential work.

In 1982, he founded the Carter Center to advance human rights and promote peace globally, notably helping find a resolution to the Sudan-Uganda conflict by helping negotiate the Nairobi Agreement. Carter also personally negotiated with Kim Il-sung to freeze North Korea's nuclear programme in 1994 and mediated negotiations between the Haitian military junta and the United States.

He spent much of his time supporting the charity Habitat for Humanity, helping build or renovate more than 4,000 homes in 14 countries.

He also authored over 30 books. In his 1996 work, "Living Faith", which serves as both a memoir and a spiritual guidebook, Carter reflected: "I have one life and one chance to make it count for something. My faith demands that I do whatever I can, wherever I am, whenever I can, for as long as I can with whatever I have to try to make a difference."

As a testament to his unwavering commitment to the common good, Carter was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002 for his decades-long efforts to promote peace, democracy, and human rights across the globe.

He always remained active in his church and taught weekly Sunday school classes until he was 95.

Carter's wife, Rosalynn Carter, died in November 2023. He is survived by his four children, 11 grandchildren, and 11 great-grandchildren.

(Pope John Paul II and Jimmy Carter meet journalists on 6 October 1979 at the White House, Washington.)

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Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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