

Church News Ireland



christian aid
80
years

Home Grown Hope
is a feast for the senses, featuring storytelling and the unforgettable flavours of Kenya in one evening!

Home Grown Hope
tickets on sale now

Wednesday
30 April
7pm-9pm
First Antrim Presbyterian Church



with live cooking from guest chef, **Mollie Cunningham**
(founder of Ballytrim Pantry)

Image of the day – Home Grown Hope

Image for today - Home Grown Hope

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Image of the day



Home Grown Hope

Come join us at First Antrim Presbyterian Church for a evening of delicious inspiration served up by the wonderful NI chef and farmer, Mollie Cunningham!

Home Grown Hope will feature a delightful mix of live cookery demonstrations (and tastings!) and stories of hope and faith in the face of poverty and injustice. It will be an evening of nourishment for your stomach and encouragement for your faith!

In November 2024, a team from Christian Aid Ireland and Northern Irish chef, Mollie Cunningham, travelled to Nairobi, Kenya to visit urban farming projects established by local faith-based partner, Beacon of Hope. Women are being trained in new farming techniques to help ensure they have enough food to both feed their families and sell for income. These projects are having a real impact on the lives of people living in a densely packed, impoverished community where hunger and domestic violence are significant challenges.

The Home Grown Hope events will share the stories the women involved with the farming projects in different areas of the city and the transformation they've experienced thanks to Beacon of Hope. However, the event will also give guests a taster of the kinds of meals that families in Nairobi now enjoy thanks to urban farming, and that's where Mollie comes in.

Mollie Cunningham is not only a trained chef, she also grows all of her own vegetables on her family farm in Killyleagh, which she cooks and sells as Ballytrim Pantry. She understands the importance of good food, not only for sustenance but also for building community and connections. While in Nairobi, Mollie was taught to cook traditional dishes by the women of the projects, using their own produce. And so, Mollie will be demonstrating these dishes live at Home Grown Hope, while also sharing about her experiences during the trip.

Featuring a mix of live cookery demonstrations and tastings, stories of hope and faith in the face of poverty and injustice - this will be an evening of nourishment for your stomach and encouragement for your faith!

News

Eire Dialogue hosts Iftar at St Ann's

Members of Eire Dialogue gathered in Molesworth Hall at St Ann's Church, Dawson Street to share an Iftar meal last week with parishioners of St Ann's and St Stephen's and Archbishop Michael Jackson.

During Ramadan Muslims break their fast following prayer at sunset. Frequently they invite people from outside their tradition to share the meal with them. Following ancient tradition this begins with dates and water and sometimes also lentil soup.

Eire Dialogue is a non-profit organisation with has several years' experience in organising inter-faith Iftars, throughout Ireland. The aim is to promote social cohesion among the diverse communities living in Ireland. Enjoying the Iftar meal in St Ann's Molesworth Hall.

The previous week Eire Dialogue hosted an Open Iftar in the Mansion House where civic and religious people were able to enjoy the company of Eire Dialogue personnel in the historic surroundings of The Lord Mayor's Parlour. On that occasion guests were welcomed by the Deputy Lord Mayor Cllr Donna Cooney.

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Following the Iftar in St Ann's, Archbishop Jackson said it had been a privilege to be invited to join both Iftar meals.



Archbishop Michael Jackson with representatives of Eire Dialogue in St Ann's.

“I appreciate the gracious and generous welcome I received from Mahsun and all in Eire Dialogue at two Iftar meals during Ramadan. I warmly welcome the opportunity they give to members of the wider community to join them as they break their fast. All who are invited have the opportunity to share in the dialogue of conversation set in a dialogue of hospitality,” he commented. “St Ann’s hosted in the Molesworth Hall last year an Open Iftar Meal and continued that tradition in 2025. We were the guests of the Select

Iftar meal in the Mansion House.



Vestry and hosted by Eire Dialogue and I am grateful to both for facilitating this opportunity to meet over food.”

Eire Dialogue started its volunteer activities in 2010 and officially established in Dublin in 2021 with the aim of connecting communities, empowering people to engage and contributing to the development of ideas on dialogue and community building. It does this by bringing people together

through discussion forums, courses, capacity building publications and outreach.

It operates nationwide and was founded by Irish Muslims of multicultural backgrounds inspired by the teachings and example of Muslim scholar and peace advocate Fethullah Gülen. Eire Dialogue is not a religious or ethnic organisation. It aims to facilitate dialogue on a whole range of social issues, regardless of any particular faith or religion. It stands for democracy, human rights, the non-instrumentalisation of religion in politics, equality and freedom of speech.

Church of England appoints first lead bishops for racial justice

The bishop of Kirkstall, the Rt. Rev. Arun Arora, and the bishop of Croydon, the Rt. Rev. Rosemarie Mallett, have been appointed by the archbishop of York and the bishop of London as joint lead bishops for the Church of England on racial justice.

Their role will involve acting as advocates on racial justice throughout the Church of England, including promoting implementation of the recommendations of “From Lament to Action,” the landmark report from the Church of England’s Anti-Racism Taskforce.

Arora and Mallett also will serve as joint deputy chairs of the newly created Racial Justice Board, a committee of the Archbishops’ Council that will oversee its work on racial justice.

They also will attend the Racial Justice Panel, an external independent scrutiny body that will provide assurance that the work on racial justice is being carried out effectively, in accordance with agreed plans and best practice.

Their appointment comes after the General Synod voted to back the findings of the final report of the Archbishops' Commission on Racial Justice, ensuring crucial resources remain available for racial justice, including a racial justice board, panel, and lead bishop.

Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell said, "I warmly welcome and celebrate the appointment of Bishop Rosemarie and Bishop Arun as joint Lead Bishops for Racial Justice in the Church of England.

"Their leadership comes at a significant moment, as we mark the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the 60th anniversary of the UN's International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

"This is a time to reflect on the progress made, to acknowledge the work still to be done and the challenges ahead, and to renew our commitment to eliminate racism.

"By standing together, we can continue to build a church – and a society – where everyone is treated with dignity, respect, and fairness."

London Bishop Sarah Mullally said, "We are all made in the image of God. It is not just our duty to respond to every

person with care and compassion, which it is, but our faith demands that we are seek justice and equity for all.

“Bishop Rosemarie and Bishop Arun have set an excellent example in their pastoral roles as bishops and in their work at a national level. I am delighted that they have been appointed to this role and offer my full support.”

Mallett said, “I am delighted to be appointed to assist leading the Church of England in its work to deepen our understanding and practice of racial justice, in parishes, dioceses and in our church structures.

“Racial justice is at the heart of the gospel, as we seek to serve God, as people of all places and races – all unified by being created in God’s image and saved by the love of his Son Jesus Christ.

“There is a lot of good work being undertaken, and our joint leadership roles will enable the church to keep focused on working for a more racially just and equitable church and society. I look forward to working in this collaborative role with Bishop Arun, as we seek to model partnership working.”

Education

Ballyclare High’s Head of Alumni Relation

The school was delighted to announce that Sandara Kelso-Robb MBE has been appointed as their Head of Alumni Relations. ✨

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As a proud alumna of Ballyclare High, Sandara brings a wealth of experience in the philanthropy sector, with a passion for encouraging young people to engage in giving and volunteering. “She will play a key role in strengthening our alumni connections

and creating meaningful opportunities for past pupils to stay involved in school life.”

A major focus will be leading the final year of the hugely successful Ballyclare High Foundation ‘Bright Futures’ fundraising campaign. This initiative has already made a significant impact, funding vital projects such as the appointment of our Emotional Wellbeing Officer and improvements to the school library.





Ballydown Primary School's Westminster experience on London 2025 tour

Carla Condell Lockhart MP posted - To all those anxious mums and dads out there from Ballydown Primary School ... your kids are doing super and you really have fab teachers and assistants looking after them.

Delighted this morning to catch them following their Westminster Tour. Big shout out to Mr Trevor Russell who

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goes over and above to give the kids the best Westminster experience. This is Trevor's 31st tour with P7 kids - what an amazing thing to do for these young people.

We know they were all enjoying themselves. A few tired faces but spirits were high ... next stop the London Eye



Cathedral Calls



Pilgrimage to Durham Cathedral celebrated the life of Saint Cuthbert



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“Last weekend, we celebrated the life of Saint Cuthbert with special services and a pilgrimage from Chester-le-Street to Durham Cathedral

“Thank you to all who joined in with the celebrations.”

Matthew Owens Fauxbourdon Canticles sung by boy choristers of Ely Cathedral

Many thanks to the boy choristers of Ely Cathedral (The Choristers of Ely Cathedral Choir) for singing Belfast-based Matthew Owens Fauxbourdon Canticles (published by Novello/Wise Music Classical), to Edmund Aldhouse for programming them, and to Jonathan Midgley for posting.

Here's the link to the service: <https://www.youtube.com/live/JtiKKhBouQw?si=5Z5Z3qDQIXIdlUI1>

Clergy and ministry

New Bishop of Achonry to be installed this Sunday

Bishop Kevin Doran, Bishop of Elphin, will be installed as Bishop of Achonry on Sunday, March 30, at a celebration ceremony in the Cathedral of the Annunciation and Saint Nathy, Ballaghaderreen.

The Installation Mass will be celebrated at 3 p.m.



The installation liturgy marks the moment when the Diocese of Achonry and the Diocese of Elphin are united 'in persona episcopi' (in the person of the Bishop).

Principal celebrant and homilist will be Bishop Doran, and His Excellency, Archbishop Luis Mariano Montemayor, Papal Nuncio to Ireland, Archbishop Francis Duffy and Bishop Michael Duignan will be the principal con-celebrants.

New Chaplain to Connor Mothers' Union

The Rev Louise Steward, rector of Finaghy and Upper Malone, is the new Chaplain to Connor Mothers' Union.

The Rev Louise Steward has taken on the role of Chaplain to Connor Mothers' Union (MU), following Archdeacon Stephen McBride's decision to stand down after 12 years in office.



Commissioned at the Connor Mothers' Union Festival Service on March 23 are, from left: Irene Gates, Unit Co-ordinator and Trustee; the Rev Louise Stewart Diocesan Mothers' Union Chaplain; Alison Skillen, Diocesan President; and Moira Thom, Diocesan Secretary and Trustee.

Louise, who is rector of Finaghy and Upper Malone, has been a member of Mothers' Union since 1996. She was involved in facilitating the MU parenting courses and was a branch leader when she was curate in St John's, Malone.

Connor Diocesan President, Alison Skillen, branch chair of St Polycarp's, Finaghy, said she had no doubt that with her background in MU work, Louise would be an asset to the diocese in its ongoing activities.

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Louise said this was an exciting opportunity. “It is another facet of ministry for me in addition to my parish work,” she said.

“My role will be one of spiritual guidance and support for members who do such hard work in activities and projects they support, a lot of it behind the scenes.”

Alison paid tribute to Archdeacon McBride’s ‘unstinting spiritual and practical support and encouragement over the years.’ The Archdeacon of Connor and vicar of All Saints’, Antrim, took on the role of All Ireland MU Chaplain in February 2023.

“His faithfulness and sound advice and insights in so many aspects of MU’s work and witness have been deeply valued and appreciated. There will be an opportunity to express our thanks more formally in due course,” the Diocesan President said.

Louise was commissioned chaplain at the Connor Diocesan Festival Service in St Anne’s Cathedral, Belfast, on Sunday March 23.

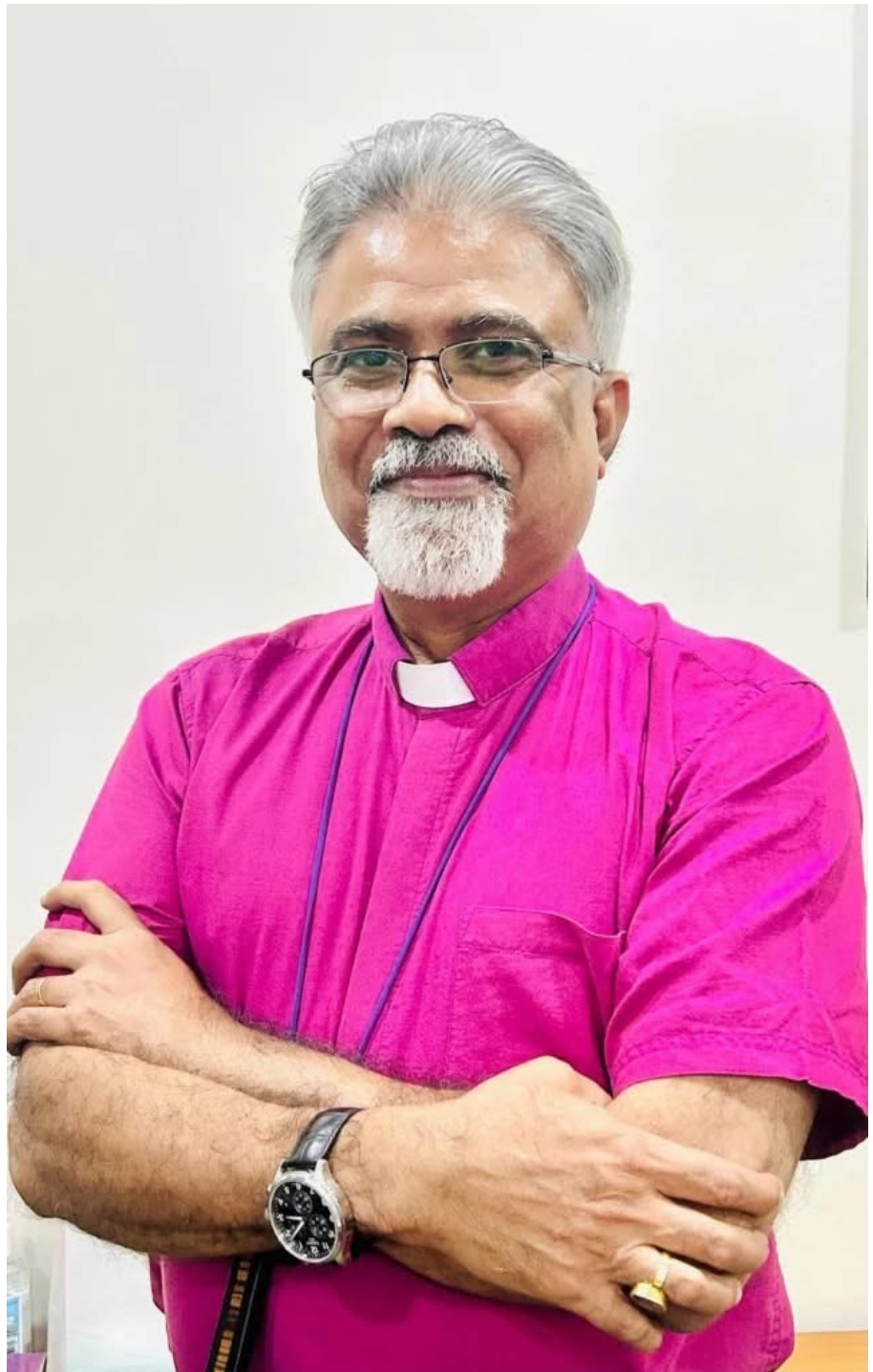
Register for Lambeth Conference webinar on discipleship, mission and evangelism

“Our main priority is to get people back to scriptures, back to our foundations in order that we may make disciples. We see a lot of people coming to faith but there is a lack of understanding about who Jesus is and what it means to be his followers.”

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The Right Revd Paul Swarup, Bishop of the Diocese of Delhi in the Church of North India, spoke to the Anglican Communion Office team about the importance of discipleship and its role in the Church's growth ahead of the Mission and Evangelism webinar.

We look forward to welcoming The Right Revd Paul Swarup as a guest speaker for the webinar on 14 and 15 May.



Read the reflection here: <https://bit.ly/3DXCIYu>

Register for the upcoming webinar here:
<https://bit.ly/3Rk2M44>



Events

It's daffodil time again in Caledon

The daffodils are in bloom and ready for cutting. Come along and help yourselves to as many as you want and pop some change in the pot.

28 Dyan Road, Caledon, BT68 4XE

In the media

Trump's team are behaving like reckless rednecks - Daily Telegraph

Past Republican presidents understood America's true interests. The incumbent woefully fails to grasp them, Ben Wallace former UK Secretary of State for Defence writes.

This week's revelation in The Atlantic magazine that President Trump's National Security team shared and discussed secrets about Yemen air strikes over the Signal messaging app reveals that the United States yet again fails to grasp that one of the first rules of intelligence is "need to know". It also demonstrates an attitude befitting a bunch of rednecks swapping stories around a bar.

Supposedly these "guys" think military operations are trivial enough to put at risk in the cause of gossip and bravado. Never forget that the real casualties of vice-president JD Vance and defence secretary Pete Hegseth's banter are brave men and women of the US armed forces who risk their actual lives to protect US interests. It demonstrates quite how ignorant the National Security team are of such operations. Firstly it is highly probable that the strikes were a team effort.

Intelligence from Gulf partners is likely to have been used. Such strikes involve a range of nations, not just the United States. And secondly, what Team Trump clearly doesn't understand is that upholding the freedom of navigation principle matters. If the West doesn't, then China will assert itself completely in the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait; Russia will seek full control over the Northwest Passage.

In that scenario the US economy really will suffer. The isolationist Maga crowd just seem unable to comprehend

that in today's world everything is connected. Every shift by the White House creates a ripple felt across the farthest oceans. Every weakening of resolve encourages every adversary.

Having observed Trump 2.0 these last 50 days, it is becoming abundantly clear that those in leadership roles really have not travelled very much. I would be surprised if many of them have a passport. They seem blindly ignorant that we live in a globalised world. It is a world governed by the very rules the US and the West crafted after the Second World War; a world that embraced free trade. Those rules weren't just about trade but about morality and democracy. The US embraced its leadership role and prospered from it. But Trump 2.0 seems to want to reject all that and feed the electorate's grievances. "A patriot loves his country. A nationalist hates his neighbours." That best sums up the Trump administration. But that great Republican president Ronald Reagan called it right: "We should beware of the demagogues who are ready to declare a trade war against our friends – weakening our economy, our national security, and the entire free world – all while cynically waving the American flag".

The 1991 book *Trumped!* by John O'Donnell, one of Trump's Atlantic City Casino bosses, tells us a lot about the President and his early days in business. His obsession with wearing suits, his conviction that the world was "ripping off" the US. A business agenda driven by personality politics, not commercial sense, goes back decades.

Every foreign diplomat should read it. The author's experience is a good guide to who is now leading the free

world – or not as it turns out. Donald Trump's Atlantic City casino ventures eventually ended as rubble. This might explain why the Israelis are sceptical about his plans for another seaside resort. When assessing the current US administration, we should not let ourselves be distracted by our sympathies for the war on woke. Those policies might be good red meat to many of us but they are not the core functions of any government.

The war on woke is the easy bit. Building an economy, future proofing social policy and securing a nation's defences are the hard yards. Anyone can demolish a building but few can build one. When I heard Steve Witkoff, Trump's envoy on Ukraine and the Middle East, speak earlier in the week about Putin, I didn't know whether to laugh or cry. It was yet another step away from the US's moral leadership.

Standing at Point de Hoc 40 years after D-Day President Reagan stated "There is a profound moral difference between the use of force for liberation and the use of force for conquest."

The ex-real estate chum of Trump said Putin was not a "bad guy", who "could be taken at his word". He then went on to parrot Kremlin lines on Russia's legitimate claim to parts of Ukraine. The leaked texts of Trump's security team reveal who they really are. They think bullying is leadership, allies are customers and trade is warfare.

That may play well in roadhouses of the Midwest but in the minds of our enemies it is an opportunity.

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The Rt Hon Sir Ben Wallace has served as Secretary of State for Defence. Published 26/03/2025

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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