

Church News Ireland



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Image of the day



USPG Mission link Myanmar

Following (today's) earthquake in Myanmar we will be supporting a church led response once we get more updates from our partner, the Church of Province of Myanmar. We welcome donations to our Rapid Response Fund below.

Myanmar (Burma) is a beautiful country which has been hit by yet another tragedy. This time it's a devastating earthquake measuring 7.7 magnitude on the richter scale. The epicentre of this natural tragedy was the city of Sagaing

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in central Myanmar, with tremors felt in Thailand, China, and India.

Mandalay, the second largest city is severely impacted. As of today, 144 have died, 732 are injured and many trapped under the rubble.

In February 2001, the military led a coup that resulted into civil war. More than 3 million people are displaced and according to the United Nations, a third of the population need humanitarian assistance. Now this disaster has hit the people who are already struggling to survive.



Archbishop Stephen, of the Church of Province of Myanmar (CPM) reflected, “Myanmar has multiple sufferings. I and the leadership of CPM have multiple pressures. Thank God for it. But please continue to pray for Myanmar and the Church.”

Join us in prayer 🙏

1. Safety and rescue of people who are still trapped under the rubble, especially in Mandalay region.
2. Pray for speedy recovery of people injured and for the families affected as the damage is extensive. Many people are suffering due to lack of electricity and communication breakdown
3. Pray for people and organisations involved in the relief efforts.
4. Pray for availability of essential medicines, blood supply and other material.

Donate here: <https://uspg.org.uk/rapid-response/>

News

Irish clergy couple advised to leave South Sudan

The Quills write - Please pray for peace and stability in South Sudan. Having just left and now on our way home (currently in Addis Ababa), we've received the following message:

"Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office update information on the political and security situation, and updated advice to British nationals in South Sudan. The political and security situation remains unpredictable. Political tensions are high and the security situation across the country could deteriorate rapidly and unpredictably. If the unstable security situation deteriorates, routes into and

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out of South Sudan may be blocked. Juba airport may close or be inaccessible. Flights may be cancelled at short notice."

The Church of Ireland couple commented, "We need an army of prayer warriors to cry out to the Lord on behalf of our Church family and all of the beloved people of S. Sudan". **Update - The Quills are back in Ireland.**

South Sudan diocese appeals to Down & Dromore diocese for prayer

Bishop Moses Zungo of Maridi Diocese has written to Bishop David McClay of Down &. Dromore with a heartfelt appeal for prayers for their link diocese and the country...



Dear Bishop David and Friends of the Diocese of Maridi,
Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I write to you with a heartfelt appeal for your prayers as we face mounting challenges in South Sudan. The current situation in our country has become increasingly tense,

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posing a serious threat to the fragile peace we have been striving to maintain. Reports of insecurity are growing, and there are fears that this unrest could worsen, especially with the approaching rainy season.

During the rainy season, the conditions often become more challenging as criminals may exploit the difficult circumstances to escalate violence, looting, and destruction. This is particularly concerning in rural areas where communities are vulnerable, and access to security assistance is limited.

In Maridi, the reality on the ground reflects a community deeply committed to survival and stability. Common people are working tirelessly in their farms and gardens, preparing for the rains in hope of securing food for their families. Their determination is inspiring, yet their efforts are overshadowed by the uncertainty that insecurity may bring.

Despite these challenges, we hold firmly to the belief that God remains sovereign over our land. We are encouraged by the words of Psalm 46:1, "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble." We believe that through prayer and unity, peace can be restored, and our people will continue to thrive.

We ask you to join us in praying:

For God's protection over the people of South Sudan, especially the communities in rural areas.

For wisdom and courage for our leaders as they seek peaceful solutions to the rising tensions.

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For peace and security to prevail so that families can safely cultivate their crops without fear.

For God's grace to sustain the Diocese of Maridi as we continue to minister to the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of our people.

We remain hopeful that this season of anxiety will pass and that peace will soon reign in our beloved nation. Your prayers and ongoing support mean so much to us, and we trust that together, we will see God's hand bring calm and restoration to South Sudan.

May God bless you abundantly.

Yours in Christ,
Rt Revd Moses Zungo
Diocesan Bishop, Diocese of Maridi

Enniscorthy and Monart MU Branch celebrate 120 years

A lovely service to celebrate 120 years of our Mothers' Union branch took place on Tuesday 25th March in St Mary's church.

The Branch reported - We were delighted to be joined by Bishop Adrian Wilkinson (Celebrant), Rev Ger James, Rev Arthur Barrett, Rev Canon Nicola Halford and Diocesan President Linda Ward.



Also present were members from other Mothers' Union branches located within our Diocese.

Presentations were made to Linda Ward and our hardworking enrolling member Claudia Kidd. There were also certificates presented to longstanding members of our Mothers' Union branch.

Following the service
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there were welcome refreshments served in the Church Institute where those present enjoyed catching up on friendships forged through the Mothers' Union over many years.

A booklet with photographs outlining the many events enjoyed by branch members over the years was also produced and given to all those present. If anyone would



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like a copy of this booklet please contact our Parish Secretary - Rosemary Walshe at 087 9281371.

Presbyterian Women's group at Helen's Bay Church support for Christian Aid

The Presbyterian Women's group at Helen's Bay Church in County Down recently heard about our work helping people living in extreme poverty on the frontline of the climate crisis.

Kaye Steele, Christian Aid's Church and Community Officer, spoke about her trip to Zimbabwe last summer where she saw the difference our supporters are making in the lives of people struggling with drought in the Mwenezi region. There, farmers are managing to make a living growing sesame, which is naturally drought tolerant, with the support of a Christian Aid funded farming cooperative and processing plant.

Kaye also described her visit to the Chipinge region where supporters' donations funded a new 5,000 litre water tank and the repair and rebuilding of 150 homes destroyed by a violent cyclone.

Kaye asked the members to make special mention of Wendy Quinn, our representative at the church (standing at the back wearing red), and Etta McGucken, the PW secretary (standing in front of Wendy wearing teal).

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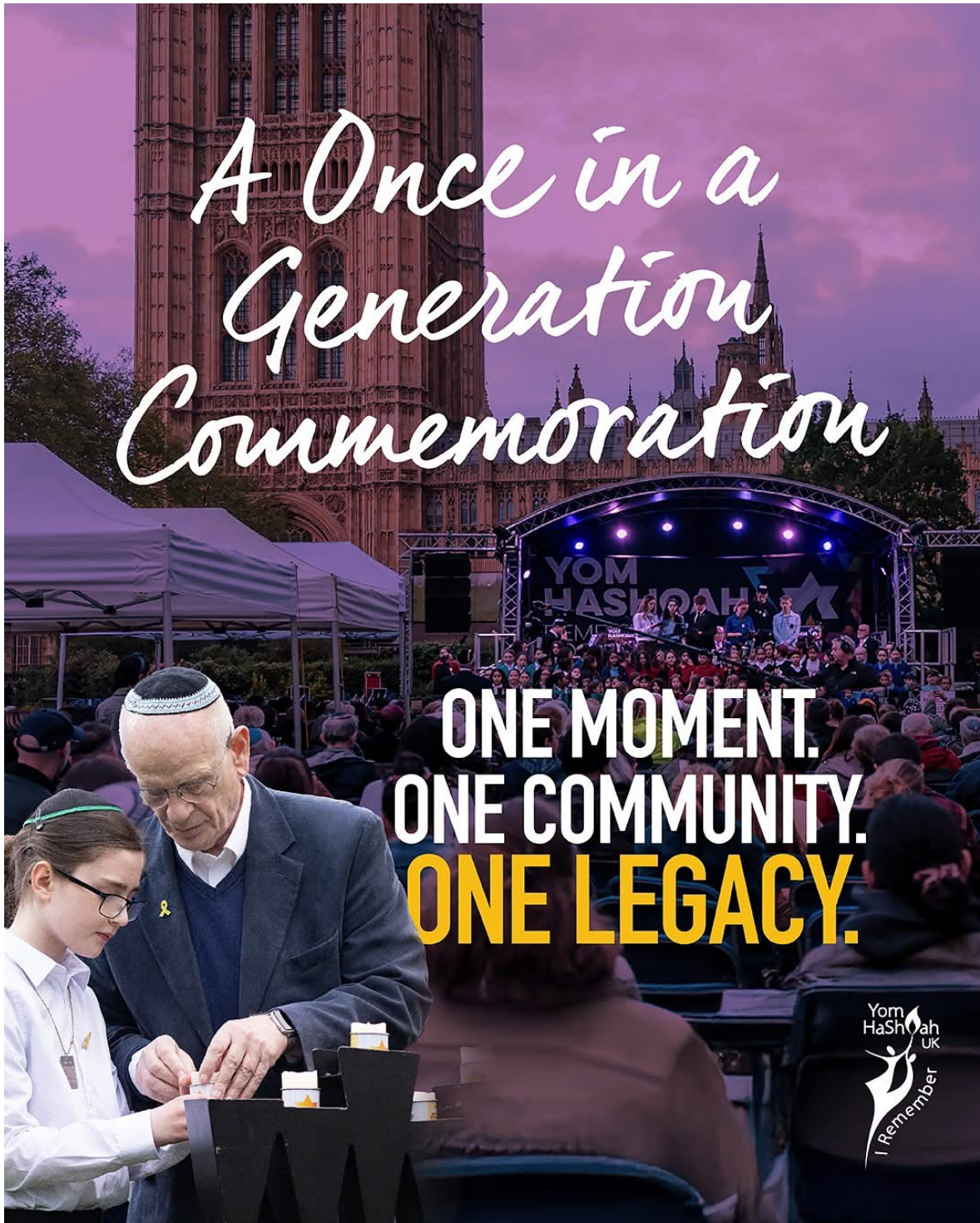
“Huge thanks to the wonderful women of Helen’s Bay PW for their warm welcome and for their interest in the work their support makes possible”, Christian Aid commented.

Five Eco-Congregation Ireland awards so far this year

The ECI Committee issues two awards in the earlier stages of the journey towards the final Eco-Congregation Ireland Award marking stages on the way – the Awareness Award and the Endeavour Award.

Eco-Congregation Ireland will send your church an Awareness Award when you begin your environmental journey and make some progress and when you get a bit further along the road, ECI will present you with an Endeavour Award. After two years you can then apply for the overall Eco-Congregation Ireland Award. For more information please get in touch with ECI at info@ecocongregationireland.com.

So far in 2025, Richhill Methodist Church, Zion Church Dublin, Knock Shrine and St Colmcille's Parish, Ballyhackamore, Belfast have received their Awareness Award and St Cronan's Parish, Swords has received the Endeavour Award.



YomHaShoah at the Houses of Parliament, Westminster on April 23

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A Once-in-a-Generation Commemoration will be held on Wednesday 23rd April 2025 at Victoria Tower Gardens, outside the Houses of Parliament

Join in the UK's largest-ever Holocaust commemoration, marking 80 years since the end of the Shoah and the liberation of Bergen-Belsen by British Armed Forces.



**YOM
HASHOAH
2025** | **80
YEARS** | **MARKING THE
LIBERATION
OF BERGEN
BELSEN BY THE
BRITISH ARMED
FORCES**
1945-2025

**THE UK JEWISH COMMUNITY'S
HOLOCAUST CEREMONY**

**WEDNESDAY
23RD APRIL 2025 • 7PM**
VICTORIA TOWER GARDENS, WESTMINSTER

**ENTRANCE BY TICKET ONLY. BOOK NOW AT
YOMHASHOAH.ORG.UK**

Yom
HaShoah
UK
I Remember

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This historic gathering will bring together Holocaust survivors, refugees, dignitaries, families, and young people —to stand as one in remembrance and unity.
One Moment. One Community. One Legacy.

Be part of history. Secure your place today.
FREE tickets – book now: www.yomhashoah.org.uk

Share this post to help reach every corner of our community
Please share to honour our Survivors and Liberators.

Education

School gives Rossorry Rector send-off for walk to Dublin

The Revd Stephen McWhirter, Rector of Rossorry Parish Church, Enniskillen, was given a send-off last Friday by the staff and pupils of Jones Memorial Primary School.

The school has historic links with Rossorry Church and following Assembly, Revd Stephen led the pupils on a short walk around the school in preparation for his pilgrimage to St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.

He began his walk on Sunday, 30 March following the Sunday morning service and over the following two weeks, will pass through Counties Cavan and Meath before reaching Dublin on Palm Sunday, 13 April.

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Cathedral Calls

Christ Church Cathedral Dublin to host Labyrinth training day

Christ Church Cathedral Dublin will host a Labyrinth training day on Wednesday July 30 2025 from 11.30am to 5pm, followed by evening prayer.

This day will introduce the labyrinth and include a presentation, a labyrinth prayer walk and training to support you in how to facilitate labyrinth prayer walks.

The day is being offered to the wider diocese as a gift to any who are interested in pursuing this ministry, but places are extremely limited, so booking will only be accepted via an incumbent or licensed chaplain. To book, contact the Dean's Vicar deansvicar@christchurch.ie

Clergy and ministry

Eight new Diocesan Readers for Down & Dromore

There was magnificent support for eight new Diocesan Readers who were commissioned on the evening on Thursday March 27 in the beautiful setting of St Columbanus, Ballyholme.





The church was packed! Congratulations to Margaret Holland Donaghcloney Parish, Paddy Marshall Willowfield Church, Thomas Proctor Ballywalter Parish, Joy Ruddell St John's Moira, Josh Thornbury Seagoe Parish Church, Michelle Savage and Mark Wells, Ballyholme Parish Church and James Simpson from Bangor Primacy.

This latest intake will bring to 76 the number of Diocesan Readers currently serving.

The preacher was the rector of Donaghcloney and Waringstown, Revd



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Mark Lennox. Canon Simon Doogan led the service and Bishop David was assisted by the Warden of Readers Revd Willie Nixon who is Rector of Banbridge. Ballyholme MU sealed the occasion with the refreshments afterwards.

Rector for Ballyjamesduff, Ballymchugh and Kildrumferton

Revd. Mark Smith has been appointed as the Rector of the Kildrumferton Group of Parishes, in the diocese of Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh serving Ballyjamesduff, Ballymchugh and Kildrumferton.

Revd. Mark has been serving as Minister-in-Charge of the Kildrumferton Group of Parishes since 2021, and was previously a Curate in the parish of Holy Trinity, Frogmore (just south of St Albans over in England). He's really enjoyed getting to know people over the last four years, loves Co. Cavan and the local community, and is excited about continuing to serve the Lord Jesus here in the years to come. Mark is married to Ruth, who is originally from Co. Armagh and a chartered accountant by training. They have a five year old daughter, who has recently started at Billis NS.

Mark has a passion for good engaging preaching, for visiting and spending time with individuals, for children's and youth work, and for reaching out into the community with the good news of the Lord Jesus. He also enjoys playing and watching sport, running, reading and putting together Disney Princess Lego with his daughter! Mark and Ruth love people and are looking forward to their home in Ballyjamesduff

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continuing to be a place of hospitality, friendship and fellowship!

Revd Mark will be instituted as the Rector of the Kildrumferton Group of Parishes on Sunday 13th April at 4.00pm in Ballymchugh. Everyone is very welcome to attend.

New Incumbent to the prospective Achonry & Skreen Group

Bishop Michael Burrows has announced the appointment of the new Incumbent to the prospective Achonry & Skreen Group of parishes:-

“The new parochial grouping of Achonry and Skreen comes into effect at Easter. I’m delighted to report that the Board (of Nomination) has appointed the Revd Andy Pierce to be rector and his Institution service will take place soon after Easter. This appointment is a significant and joyful affirmation by the parish and the wider diocese of Andy’s gifts, commitment, energy and vision. He is now in a position to think in the longer term about his plans and hopes for the parishes, and in doing so he deserves your support, encouragement and prayers. I personally am delighted that Andy is staying in this diocese, where colleagues greatly admire his distinctive perspectives and his great integrity. We wish him and Jackie continued blessing and happiness in their home in Skreen.” he went on to say “I also want to pay tribute to all the hard work and goodwill which parishioners have displayed of late in preparing Achonry and Skreen to be a single parish family

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and I know this cooperation and goodwill will deepen under Andy's energetic leadership." Michael, Tuam Limerick & Killaloe



Retirement of Archdeacon Leslie Stevenson

The Diocesan Council took the opportunity recently to mark the coming retirement of Archdeacon Leslie Stevenson. (Photo page above)

At the end of their meeting, held in The Oak Centre in Dunboyne, they presented him with a gift and a special cake, baked by Rhonda Willoughby. It was an opportunity to

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say thank you to a much loved archdeacon, and to recognise his faithful service to Meath and Kildare.

Sixtieth anniversary of Ordination of Senior Minister of Bessbrook Presbyterian Church

On behalf of the Minister, Kirk Session, Congregational Committee and congregation of Bessbrook Presbyterian Church we warmly congratulate our much loved Senior Minister, Rev Robert Nixon BA on the sixtieth anniversary of his Ordination as a Minister of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

We remember with great fondness and appreciation Mr Nixon's dedicated ministry to our congregation from 1972 to 1998, along with his dear late wife, Mrs Nixon and the Nixon family- Paul, Andrew, Sharon and Stephen.

We recall many memories, both happy and sad as Mr Nixon faithfully preached the Gospel to God's glory. Rev Nixon was Ordained to the Ministry on 25th March 1965 in Tobermore Presbyterian Church.

We send our love, best wishes and prayerful support to Mr Nixon as he reaches this wonderful milestone by God's grace and providence. May he and all his family continue to know God's richest blessing as they continue to serve our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

Rev JKA McIntyre, Minister.
Danny Kennedy, Clerk of Session.

Events

Brunching for a Better Tomorrow

Grab a friend and join the folk of the East Belfast Mission for a community Brunch from 10am to 12pm on the 28th May 2025 in their Refresh Café.

In joining them you will be raising vital funds for their Community Groups including Aspire Youth Club, Over 50's lunch club, Weekly Drop in, Community Dinners, Friendship Circle & Mums & Tots.

Sign up here - <https://register.enthuse.com/ps/event/BigBuffetBrunchBrunching>

Irish premiere of Neil Martin's arrangement of Frank Ormsby's poem 'Cradle Song'

At their next concert on April 12th, the Belfast Philharmonic Chamber Choir and the North Belfast Youth Choir will perform the Irish premiere of Neil Martin's arrangement of Frank Ormsby's poem 'Cradle Song'.

Commissioned by NBYC, Neil is a composer from Belfast whose work has been performed across the world from Ground Zero to Mostar Bridge and the Royal Albert Hall, as

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well as being played on the International Space Station. As one of Ireland's most innovative and talented musicians, he has contributed to over 100 albums and has written for choirs, orchestras, theatre, opera, TV and film.

Tickets for this exciting concert are available to book through the Phil's website

[\[https://www.belfastphilharmonic.org.uk/dbpage.php?pg=home\]](https://www.belfastphilharmonic.org.uk/dbpage.php?pg=home)

Dialogue of Friendship: Listening Well to Build Communities

Booking is now Open for this 2025 Dialogue of Friendship Event on Saturday May 17 2025 at Dundrum Methodist Church (Dublin)

This year's event, Dialogue of Friendship: Listening Well to Build Communities, is the third year of collaboration between the Church of Ireland Interfaith Working Group and the Sanctuary in Faith stream of Places of Sanctuary Ireland. The keynote speaker will be Dr Eburn Joseph, Special Rapporteur for the National Plan Against Racism. Other organisations presenting include:

Northern Ireland Interfaith Forum
Holocaust Education Ireland
Conversation Club (Waterford)
All Nations Ministries (Belfast)

The event is free of charge but pre-booking is essential. A vegetarian lunch will be provided.

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Please note the following key details for delegates:

Date: Saturday, 17th May 2025, 10.30am – 3.30pm

Venue: Dundrum Methodist Church, D16 WK27

(Located close to Balally Luas stop. Free car parking available at the church)

Booking link: <https://bit.ly/431Wlna> (free of charge)

Resources



GRANT NEWS!

If your Parish runs – or is thinking of starting – a Toddler group you can access funding (Republic of Ireland) to help with:

- BUYING TOYS
- EQUIPMENT
- CHILDREN'S HEALTHY SNACKS
- ACTIVITIES SUCH AS ARTS AND CRAFTS OR MUSIC
- PARENTING CLASSES – E.G. FIRST AID FOR CHILDREN

There are three streams of funding:

- €800 FOR EXISTING GROUPS
- €1,000 FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW GROUPS
- UP TO €300 TO ESTABLISH AND OPERATE BUGGY WALKING GROUPS.

The funding will be allocated to Parent and Toddler Groups nationwide through local City/County Childcare Committees (CCCs). Find your local CCC HERE: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/52b71-support-for-parents-city-and-county-childcare-committees/>



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

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Link in Monday through Saturday from early morning

Please recommend to your friends