

# Church News Ireland

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**Image of the day – Celtic bluebells**

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## Image of the day

### Celtic bluebells

Bringing a seasonal touch to some Celtic iconography

## News



## Belfast Musical Director to be Principal Conductor of National Youth Choir

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## **Matthew Quinn of Capella Caecillianni is to be Principal Conductor of the National Youth Choir**

Big congratulations to Matthew Quinn on this very prestigious and well deserved appointment.

National Youth Choir said, “We are delighted to share that we have made two exciting new appointments to our creative team!

“Matthew Quinn will take up the position of Principal Conductor of National Youth Choir (15-18 Years), while Carris Jones will step into the role of Head of Creative Programmes”.

Matthew completes the new-look line up of conductors for National Youth Choir, joining the Principal Conductors of the 18-25 and 9-15 choirs, Nicholas Chalmers and Lynsey Callaghan. They will work alongside Creative Director Lucy Hollins and Carris Jones to develop the new creative vision for National Youth Choir.

## **Eritrean Orthodox Community welcomes Archbishop of Dublin to worship**

**On Saturday April 26 Archbishop Michael Jackson worshipped with members of the Eritrean Orthodox community who belong to the Oriental Orthodox family of churches.**

The Archbishop was warmly welcomed and as co-chair of the Anglican Oriental Orthodox International Commission he





*Members of the Eritrean Orthodox Community with Archbishop Jackson.*

was particularly pleased to share fellowship with the Eritreans who are members of the commission.

Addressing members of the community he observed that for more than 30 years the Eritrean Orthodox Church had sustained their presence and witness in Dublin in the midst of many challenging circumstances. One of these challenges had been finding a stable place to worship, he said and expressed delight that they had now found such a place.

“The worldwide fellowship of Christians has always enabled us to share more than we can possibly imagine. The

contribution that you make to Christian life in Ireland is important to us all. The antiquity and the longevity of your tradition of Christianity matters greatly to us because you continue to give us a particular understanding of the faith delivered by Jesus Christ to the apostles and shared worldwide. In this year 2025 all Christian traditions share the date of Easter and so it is a particular pleasure for me to be with you as the conclusion of the Octave of Easter falls on this particular Saturday,” he stated.

The Archbishop invited the Eritrean community to visit Christ Church Cathedral where the Dean has undertaken to give them a personal tour. He sees it as part of his mission to facilitate those who are partners in Christianity in Dublin to feel welcomed to the cathedral not least as the cathedral prepares to celebrate its millennium.

## **Doors are coming off at Shandon**

**St Anne’s Church, Shandon, was delighted to share the good news that it has been awarded a Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) grant of €30,000.**

This funding will be used to restore the church’s front doors which are believed to be the original doors, which date back over 300 years.

The doors of St Anne’s are an iconic feature of this historic building, serving as a warm and welcoming entry point for worshippers, visitors, and the local community. Their restoration is a vital step in preserving the church’s heritage while ensuring it remains a vibrant and inviting space.

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## How about this for a view on your arrival into Borris

A Georgian, granite village in Carlow, full of charm on the River Barrow - the old granite houses and Victorian shop fronts have remained largely intact. Most of the town's buildings stand on the north side of a steeply rising main street, overshadowed by the presence of the very substantial demesne walls of Borris House.



Rev. Meghan Farr, Priest in Charge at St Anne's, expressed her gratitude for the grant and emphasised the significance of the doors:

“The doors of St Anne’s Shandon have stood as a symbol of welcome and openness for over three centuries. They are not just a physical gateway but a reflection of our mission to embrace all who come through them. This restoration



ensures that we can continue to extend that welcome for generations to come.”

This restoration is part of a series of works identified in the Conservation Management Plan conducted last year, which was funded by the Community Monument Fund. The plan outlined key preservation and conservation needs for St Anne’s to ensure the longevity of this beloved landmark.

St Anne’s Shandon wishes to thank the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, and Cork City Council for their support through the BHIS grant. This funding plays an essential role in safeguarding our shared cultural heritage and maintaining the beauty of our historic buildings.

In addition, St Anne’s has recently been awarded €130,000 from the Community Monument Fund under the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. This generous funding will support Phase 1 works identified in the Conservation Management Plan, which include essential repairs to the timber and metal structures supporting the bells. These elements have begun to show signs of deterioration, and the work aims to stabilise them and prevent further decay—marking a crucial step forward in preserving the structural integrity and heritage of this historic site.

The Select Vestry of St Anne's is deeply committed to the conservation of this historic church. Additional restoration and preservation works are planned in the coming months and years, guided by the Conservation Management Plan. However, the scope of future projects will depend on



securing further grant funding and support through fundraising efforts.

These works will complement urgent repairs to the clock face and mechanism being carried out by Cork City Council, supported by a €250,000 grant awarded to the Council under the Historic Structures Fund. This is part of a broader commitment to revitalising the Shandon area through strategic investment in its rich architectural heritage.

St Anne's will endeavour to keep the church and tower open to visitors during the conservation works whenever it is safe to do so, in accordance with the guidance of our conservation architect and in line with health and safety guidelines. Information on closings will be communicated through the church website and social media.

Work on the doors is expected to commence this week. with updates provided to the community as the project progresses.

## **Same-sex debate: 'Most controversial liturgy in a generation' needs proper process, says Bishop**

**A new booklet by Bishop Andrew Watson has been published on the Diocese of Guildford website to guide Church of England communities through ongoing discussions around sexuality, relationships, and marriage - including prayers for same-sex couples.**

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## **The Nieuwe Kerk, New Church**

a Dutch Baroque Protestant church in The Hague, Netherlands



Titled *Living in Love and Faith: Discerning the Mind of the Church*, the booklet addresses how churches can engage thoughtfully and respectfully with one of the most divisive topics facing the Church today. It lays out a process of learning, listening, and discernment, encouraging unity and mutual understanding between those with differing theological views, in order to make actionable steps forward, guided by church leadership.

The document outlines the importance of collective decision-making within church leadership and highlights the

need for trust as the Church considers next steps. A key focus is the recently introduced Prayers of Love and Faith - a set of resources that can be used in services to bless same-sex couples. These prayers were formally commended for use by bishops in December 2023, but their use remains optional for individual clergy.

Bishop Andrew raises concerns about the Living in Love and Faith (LLF) process and what he describes as the “lack of clarity” about its end point and the implications for the Church’s teaching on marriage.

The booklet notes that many in the Church cannot accept any change to the traditional doctrine of marriage, which they believe is rooted in Scripture and central to Christian understanding of creation and redemption.

The document also addresses the strain LLF has placed on relationships within the global Anglican Communion and with other denominations. It stresses the need for strong, honest, and supportive relationships in order to grow together as a Church.

Bishop Watson calls for the LLF process to be placed “on a proper theological and canonical footing”, suggesting that the Church should follow the full Canon B2 legislative route if it is to move forward with such significant liturgical changes. He warns that trying to move too quickly, without proper planning, could damage the unity of the Church:

“It may take a little more time to do this properly: but how essential that we do so, especially given that the task in



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hand is not so much the building of a tower but rather a tending to the wellbeing of the Body of Christ.”

Looking ahead, Bishop Watson outlines three possible paths: remaining at the current stage with no further developments; slowly moving forward if enough agreement can be found; or seeking a more formal "creative settlement" to hold the tension together within the House and College of Bishops.

“Adopting Canon B2 as the way ahead will next lead to a proper discussion about where we go from here,” he writes.

Whatever the outcome, Bishop Watson concludes, prayer, sensitivity, and pastoral care must remain at the heart of the Church’s response.

## Education

### St Dominic’s Grammar School are Trocaire finalists ✨

**The school writes - We are delighted to hear from Trócaire that 3 of our RE Human Rights games: The Game of Life, The Well Game and Globble were shortlisted as all Ireland finalists in the Post-Primary category of Trócaire's Game Changers competition.**

This is a fantastic achievement, there were over 209 entries from schools, and Youth Groups from across the island of Ireland this year.



The game creators of these 3 games are now invited to showcase their games at the competition final on Tuesday 13th of May to be held in Dublin at the Helix DCU. All of the students attending this event will play the shortlisted games and get to vote for their favourite. These votes will be added to the Trocaire judges' scores to determine the winning games.

Well done to the RE team and all our creative year 10 pupils.

## **Ballymena Academy at the CyberFirst EmPower Girls Event**



**On Tuesday 29th April, 45 Year 8 girls attended the CyberFirst EmPower Girls Event which took place at the ICC Belfast.**

This event gave the girls a chance to learn about the potential career opportunities in tech and cyber security from professionals and experts.

It was the second year that CyberFirst have held this event in Northern Ireland. The full press release can be found by clicking on the link - <https://syncni.com/article/13383/empower-girls-event-inspires-600-young-women-to-shape-the-future-of-tech-in-northern-ireland>. Our thanks go to Victoria Logan from CyberFirst, ICC Belfast and Aflac for hosting such a brilliant day out for the girls.





## Wallace High School visit to Murlough National Nature Reserve

**Before Easter, in the glorious County Down sunshine, a group of Year 13 students from Wallace High School visited Murlough National Nature Reserve as part of their AS Biology studies.**

The aim of the trip was to observe and record the environmental factors affecting biodiversity in these dune fields, which are among the best and most extensive examples of dune heath in Ireland.

During the day, students collected biotic measurements related to the diversity of plant species in four different areas





of the dune system at Murlough. They also gathered a range of abiotic data, which was later analysed in the school laboratories.

The study of biotic and abiotic data within Murlough provides A-Level students with an excellent opportunity to apply ecological principles in a real-world setting and offers valuable insights into the interaction between biotic and abiotic factors in this nature reserve.

Throughout the day, students were also respectful of their environment and completed a litter pick as they walked through the dune system.

Head of Biology, Dr Susan Terris, would like to thank the National Trust for facilitating the students' study of this

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coastal nature reserve, and also Ms S Walker, Biology Technician, for her expertise in preparing equipment for the field trip, which greatly contributed to the successful collection of data within the dune system.

## Cathedral Calls

### St Canice May morning



**Now is the month of Maying. . . On the morning the cathedral choir and clergy greeted the sunrise on the top of the bell tower, singing madrigals and praying for church and citie.**





## Clergy and ministry

### First Lisburn Installation Service update

**Update on the Installation Service for Rev Mariann Gilicze... Dear First Lisburn family and guests...**

“Please note that due to unforeseen circumstances, the Installation service for our new minister originally scheduled for Friday 9th May has been postponed to SATURDAY 10th MAY at 730pm in the church. We apologise for any inconvenience caused”.

## Events

### **‘Dare to Hope’ -Young Adult Faith gathering at Knock Shrine**

**‘Dare to Hope’ -Young Adult Faith Gathering at the Youth Village at Knock Shrine takes place on Saturday June 14th.**

The Irish Bishops Conference invites young adults (ages 18–30) to embark on a journey as "Pilgrims of Hope" this Jubilee year

Guided by the theme of hope, this gathering aims to inspire participants to deepen their faith, renew their commitment to Christ, and engage in the mission of the Church in the world today.

Throughout the event, participants will reflect on their own faith journeys, share experiences, and engage in meaningful discussions on topics such as hope in the face of adversity, living out one's purpose, and the role of young adults in the Church.

The event will feature a mix of prayer, worship, talks, group discussions, and opportunities for fellowship, creating a

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vibrant and supportive community of young pilgrims. Special emphasis will be placed on cultivating a deeper relationship with God, embracing the hope found in Christ, and inspiring young adults to carry this hope back into their daily lives.

Booking is essential as places are limited.

Tickets are available online at [www.eventbrite.ie](http://www.eventbrite.ie) here:  
<https://tinyurl.com/mphehkbc>

## In the media

### Glorifying the PIRA makes light of the disappeared - Gavin Robinson MP

**DUP Leader Gavin Robinson MP has said the appointment of Eamonn Henry as the new Lead Investigator for the Independent Commission for the location of Victims' Remains is a reminder of the horrific acts of terror perpetrated by PIRA and those who eulogise and glory in the PIRA's actions, make light of crimes such as this.**

“The heartbreaking cases of Joseph Lynskey, Columba McVeigh, Robert Nairac, and Seamus Maguire are tragic reminders of the brutality inflicted during the Troubles and the enduring pain faced by victims' families. Of the seventeen people ‘disappeared’, these four remain unresolved.

My prayerful thoughts are with each family who have suffered an unimaginable grief.



These murders, carried out by the Provisional IRA, were not only acts of violence but acts of cruelty, denying families even the basic dignity of mourning at a grave. Decades later, justice remains unfulfilled for too many. Those who glory in the PIRA, make light of crimes such as these.

I welcome the appointment of Eamonn Henry as the new lead investigator for the Disappeared and give him our full support. His role is crucial in driving forward the search for truth and delivering long overdue closure to families who have suffered for far too long.

We continue to press for full disclosure and the recovery for all seventeen families. Those within the Republican movement with knowledge should come forward and help bring closure.”

## Poem for today

### A boat beneath a sunny sky

By Lewis Carroll

A boat beneath a sunny sky,  
Lingering onward dreamily  
In an evening of July —

Children three that nestle near,  
Eager eye and willing ear,  
Pleased a simple tale to hear —

Long has faded that sunny sky:

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Echoes fade and memories die:  
Autumn frosts have slain July.

Still she haunts me, phantomwise,  
Alice moving under skies  
Never seen by waking eyes.

Children yet, the tale to hear,  
Eager eye and willing ear,  
Lovingly shall nestle near.

In a Wonderland they lie,  
Dreaming as the days go by,  
Dreaming as the summers die:

Ever drifting down the stream —  
Lingering in the golden gleam —  
Life, what is it but a dream?

## Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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# 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](mailto:houstonmckelvey@mac.com)

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