

Church News Ireland



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Image for today - Musical Fellows

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Short reading and a prayer daily on this site

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Image of the day

Musical Fellows

Two superb organists - Hearty congratulations to Dr Kerry Houston (right) on becoming FTCD - a Fellow of TCD.

Kerry is in the company of Dr Andrew Johnston (Robes of Distinction attire), former Assistant Organist of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. Fellows and Scholars were announced recently.



News

Cooke Centenary's marathon fundraiser for Christian Aid

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Christian Aid says - Huge thanks to our wonderful supporters at Cooke Centenary Church who offered refreshments to the spectators who lined Belfast's Ormeau Road to cheer on the marathon runners, in exchange for a donation to Christian Aid.

L-R, Joanie Riddell, Colin Riddell and Joan Hamilton. Thank you so much!

Welcome to the Ballys

Rev Jonny & Roger from Ballyclare and Ballynure parish welcomed Lucy & Kathleen from Africa at the airport.

“We hope as many people get a chance to meet them this week. We encourage everyone to come next Sunday to our morning worship and then lunch. Don't forget to sign up at -

<https://theunitedparish.churchsuite.com/events/t0vp4ffl>

Diocesan President commissioned for Cashel, Ferns and Ossory Mothers Union

The Mothers' Union Diocesan Eucharist and Annual Festival Service with the Commissioning of Diocesan President, Mrs. Linda Ward & New Diocesan Trustees by The Rt. Revd. Adrian Wilkinson, Bishop, took place in St. Canice's Cathedral, Kilkenny on Thursday 1st May.

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Linda from Castlecomer Branch, was encouraged by a large congregation of Mothers' Union members, friends, and family gathered in St. Canice's Cathedra for a wonderful and



uplifting service. **The All-Ireland Mothers' Union President, Kay Clarke**, was present. Representatives of the Boys' Brigade Mr Richard Codd and Girls Friendly Society Hilda Bailey were welcomed to the service.

Five former Diocesan Presidents attended Mrs. Irene Murray, Mrs. Hazel Sherlock, Mrs. Phyllis Grothier, the Revd. Margaret Sykes, and Mrs. Lesley Bayley, who as the immediate past President, passed on the badge of office to Linda.

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The Bishop also commissioned the newly elected members of the Trustee Board:



- Diocesan Secretary: Kathleen Rothwell
- Diocesan Treasurer: Joan Jackson
- VP Fundraising and Communication: Phyllis Grothier
- VP Action and Outreach & PRO: Margaret Jacob
- Action and Outreach Coordinator: Claudia Kidd
- Young Families Representative: Jackie Neale
- Worldwide Representative: Lilia Harper
- Safeguarding Officer: Brigid Barrett
- Enterprise Representative: Elizabeth Johnston

The Revd. Ger James, Diocesan Chaplain, arranged the service with

The Very Revd. Stephen Farrell, Dean of the Cathedral and the support of

Dr. Harry Meehan, Cathedral Organist.

Liturgy and Reflections:

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Processional Hymn: "God is here! As we his people"

Readings:



Gospel Reading – The Revd. Ger James, Diocesan
Chaplain Reflection: Revd. Canon Trevor Sargent, Unit
Coordinator for Faith and Policy

Commissioning of the New Diocesan President, Mrs. Linda
Ward – by Bishop Adrian Wilkinson

Recommitment of Membership to the Mothers' Union – led
by Mrs. Linda Ward

Prayers – led by the Revd. Pat Coleman (VP Finance and
Central Services) and the Revd. Margaret Sykes (VP Faith
and Policy)

You may view the service at <https://youtu.be/78FyGK1uR4Y>

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Education



Wallace High explore the Curly Burn River

Year 11 Geographers enjoyed a successful field trip to Magilligan, investigating changes along the Curly Burn River.



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A great day of data collection, teamwork and sunshine— thanks to Natalie and Michael for leading!

Coleraine GS fundraise for Macmillian Cancer

Representatives from the Year 13 Shared Education Charity Group presented Macmillian Cancer Support with a cheque for £565 following their fundraising efforts this year.

Asha 2026 Team Announcement

We are proud to introduce the Asha 2026 Team— 14 dedicated students and 4 enthusiastic staff members— who will journey to Delhi, India in February 2026.

They will continue to strengthen our school's valued partnership with Asha Society and work alongside them in the Kusumpur community.

In the months ahead, the team will be organising a variety of fundraising events to support Asha's incredible work. We are excited to witness the impact our young people will make through their compassion, energy, and commitment.

If you would like to support our efforts, there will be plenty of opportunities to get involved. Every donation—no matter how small—is deeply appreciated.

Together, let's make a difference!

Cathedral Calls

Clergy Support Festival in St Paul's

We're excited to share a musical sneak peek of our 370th Festival, one of the oldest choral music events in the world...

Bradford, Lichfield and St Paul's Cathedral Choirs will sing 'Lord, thou hast been our refuge' together as one. Composed by Vaughan Williams in 1921, this joint anthem is a setting of Psalm 90, in which Moses reflects on the eternity of God.

Tuesday 13 May, 5pm. St Paul's Cathedral, Admission free

Book your tickets now: www.clergysupport.org.uk/festival

Clergy and ministry

Armagh

Congratulations, best wishes and blessings to **Revd Andy Moore** and his family as Andy was instituted as Rector of the Parishes of **Clonfeacle, Derrygortreavy & Eglis** (Drumsallan) on Sunday 4th May 2025 by Archbishop John McDowell. Photo next page.

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The preacher at the service was Mr Gifford Savage, Diocesan Reader in the Diocese of Down & Dromore. Photo - See page above - Institution of **Revd Andy Moore**



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After the process of a Board of Nomination, the Archbishop of Armagh has announced that the **Rev'd Rodney Blair**, currently Vicar of Shankill Parish, Lurgan, has been appointed to become Rector of the Parishes of **Kildress & Altedesert**. The date of Rodney's Institution Service has yet to be confirmed. In the meantime, may we remember Rodney and Judith, as well as their children Harry and Patrick in our prayers and we look forward to Rodney's ministry which will begin in his new parishes later this year. Photo page 11 above.

The Archbishop of Armagh has appointed the **Rev'd Shirley Murphy**, currently serving as an Incumbent in the Church in Wales, as Rector of the Grouped Parishes of **Dundalk, Heynestown Union, Ballymascanlan Union and Creggan**. The date of the Service of Institution will be agreed in due course. In the meantime, may we also remember Shirley and Julian, and their son Dylan in our prayers and we look forward to Shirley's ministry with us. Photo page 11 above.

The Archbishop of Armagh, the Most Rev'd John McDowell said:

'I am delighted that the Rev'd Shirley Murphy and the Rev'd Rodney Blair will be coming to serve in the Diocese. Rodney will be no stranger to many people in Armagh as he served as a Youth Worker and served his internship as a deacon in the Diocese. It gives me great pleasure to welcome Rodney and his wife Judith and children Harry and Patrick back to the Diocese and to the parishes of Kildress and Altedesert.

The Rev'd Shirley is joining us from farther afield-in fact from India by way of the Church in Wales where she has

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ministered for the past five years. I know that Shirley and her husband Julian and son Dylan will find a warm welcome in the Dundalk Group of parishes as she begins her ministry there. Moving to a new country and a new Province of the Anglican Communion is a considerable undertaking for Shirley but it is one which will I am confident will enrich the parishes, the Diocese and the Church of Ireland.'

Rodney commented:

'Judith, Harry, Patrick and I are thankful for a call to Kildress and Altedesert and looking forward to getting to know, worship with and minister to the people there.

It has been a great joy to work with an excellent staff team in Shankill Parish, minister with Archdeacon Mark Harvey and worship with our church family there; we will be sad to leave but we trust God's guiding and look forward to serving Him in this new season.'

Shirley commented:

'It is truly an honour to have been appointed as Rector to the Dundalk Group of Parishes in the Diocese of Armagh and I would like to sincerely thank Archbishop John for appointing me to this position. As a family we look forward moving to Ireland and also getting to know the congregation members and ministering to the community at large.

Connor

The Rev Marcus Hart, curate of Christ Church, Ware, Hertfordshire, has been appointed rector of the Parish of Skerry, Rathcavan and Newtowncrommelin (St Patrick's Parish Church, **Broughshane**).

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Marcus is married to Jude, a children's physiotherapist, and they have a three-year-old daughter and three-month-old son.



The couple are both originally from Northern Ireland.

Jude is from Ballymena, while Marcus grew up in

Lisburn. He has a BEng in Civil Engineering from Queen's University Belfast, graduating in 2015. He obtained a PGCE in Secondary Mathematics with Qualified Teacher Status in 2016 and studied a BA in Theology at St Mellitus College from 2019-2022.

He was an intern for Scripture Union NI from 2014-2015; a ministry apprentice in St Mark's Church, Battersea Rise, London, for a year from September 2015; and taught Maths in Thames Christian School, London, from 2016-2019.

As an Ordinand, Marcus worked in St Mark's, Battersea Rise, before his appointment as curate in Christ Church, Ware, in July 2022.

Over the years, he has volunteered as a rugby coach, Scripture Union camp leader and church youth leader, and

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has also volunteered on mission trips to Zambia and Tanzania.

In his spare time, Marcus enjoys rugby – though admits that these he mostly watches the game – fitness, hiking, cold water swimming and travel, but especially enjoys time with his wife and children.

Marcus explained why he was drawn to the role of rector in Skerry, Rathcavan and Newtowncrommelin. “St Patrick's is a church that is embedded in its community and seeks to reach those outside the Church and to grow those who are inside it,” he said.

“I hope to bring a heart that is passionate for Jesus, that encourages those in St Patrick’s to grow in their relationship with him and enables them to go live that faith out. Jude and I can't wait to meet everyone and start forming relationships with the whole church.”

A date for the Service of Institution in Broughshane will be advised in due course.

Limerick

The Dean of Limerick, the Very Revd Niall J W Sloane has announced the appointment of Mr Scott Elliott as curate-assistant of Limerick City Parish.



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Scott will be made deacon in Saint Mary's Cathedral, Limerick on Sunday 8th June – the feast of Pentecost at 7.30pm. All are most welcome to attend.'

Meath & Kildare

Sean Murphy has been appointed Curate to **Tullamore Union with Geashill Union**. Sean comes from Bunclody, Co Wexford and is married to Rachel, who is the Childrens' Ministry Co-Ordinator for the Church of Ireland Sean has just served a year as a deacon-intern.

Sean describes his journey towards ordination as being “through a winding but purposeful road—via the military, the police, the world of IT and charity leadership, and into pastoral ministry.” He continued, “Through it all, the common thread has been people—real lives, real challenges, and the incredible good news of Jesus Christ that speaks into the heart of every one of them”

Talking of his background he says, “Though my accent may be a little patchworked these days, I am very much a country boy at heart - raised in the English shires and happiest when surrounded by fields, stone walls, and a kettle that is just boiled. I feel most grounded in rural settings, where community life and the seasons' rhythm often mirror God's quiet faithfulness.

Sean and Rachael have five children. Three are grown up and living in the UK, while two are still at home.

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Bishop Pat Storey, “We look forward to welcoming Sean, Rachael and their family to the diocesan family. We are looking forward to everything that Sean’s ministry will bring to Tullamore Union with Geashill Union. They will be assured of a very warm welcome.”

Events

St Bartholomew’s to sing Choral Evensong once more at Nuns Cross

Once again, we are delighted to welcome the choir of St Bartholomew’s , Clyde Road, Dublin and their Director of Music Mr Ben Barnes, to Nun’s Cross next Sunday 11th May at 5p.m. to lead a service of choral evensong.

Variously described as “A serenade of the setting sun”, “A symphony of the soul”, and “A whispered promise”, the echoing strains are the perfect way to end a summer’s day.

So, please come and join us - all are welcome - and stay for some refreshments afterwards.

The Send I May 17 I SSE Arena Belfast

**What if one day could help fuel revival in a nation?
What if YOU were part of it?**

@summermadnessinsta is so excited to be part of it!

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We're talking wall-to-wall worship, raw stories, Gospel word, and a massive YES to Jesus + mission.

Bring your crew.

Doors at 12PM | Event 1–9PM

David Funk, Jenn Johnson, Circuit Riders, Prayer Storm + more.

SSE Arena Belfast

£15 via Ticketmaster

Perspective

The Trump effect?

Has Donald Trump managed to install two Left of centre governments that were expected to lose power, first in Canada and now in Australia?

The re-election of the Labor Party in Australia has been attributed, at least in part, to a backlash against the country's conservatives occasioned by the activities of the US president.

Anthony Albanese, the prime minister, has been returned with a far bigger majority, while the Right-of-centre Liberal party was trounced and its leader Peter Dutton lost his seat. In Canada, the Conservatives were also soundly beaten following Mr Trump's talk of making Canada the "51st state". The opposition leader in Canada, Pierre Poilievre, also lost his seat.

Is this the Trump effect?

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A past friendship with the US president did not appear to harm Nigel Farage, whose Reform UK rocked the English political system to its foundations last week. The party leader had managed to distance himself from some of Mr Trump's more outlandish statements, notably about Ukraine and Russia. Moreover, had it been a national election, the influence of the US president might have been greater.

We cannot know how strong this phenomenon has been, nor how long it will last. But perversely, the political parties most at risk seem to be those of the Right. Mr Trump could not care less and is happy to deal with Mark Carney, Sir Keir Starmer or whoever, providing they bow to his will.

But if the greatest damage is being inflicted on conservative parties, the split in the UK on the Right will have to be resolved before the next election or Labour and its supporters, like the Liberal Democrats, will stay in government.

Poem for today

Twice Shy

by Seamus Heaney

Her scarf a la Bardot,
In suede flats for the walk,
She came with me one evening
For air and friendly talk.
We crossed the quiet river,
Took the embankment walk.



Traffic holding its breath,
Sky a tense diaphragm:
Dusk hung like a backcloth
That shook where a swan swam,
Tremulous as a hawk
Hanging deadly, calm.

A vacuum of need
Collapsed each hunting heart
But tremulously we held
As hawk and prey apart,
Preserved classic decorum,
Deployed our talk with art.

Our Juvenilia
Had taught us both to wait,
Not to publish feeling

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And regret it all too late -
Mushroom loves already
Had puffed and burst in hate.

So, chary and excited,
As a thrush linked on a hawk,
We thrilled to the March twilight
With nervous childish talk:
Still waters running deep
Along the embankment.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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**Link in Monday through Saturday from
early morning**

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