



Image of the day

Thy Kingdom Come is a global prayer movement during the time between Ascension Day and Pentecost (this year 13th - 23rd May). What started in 2016 as an invitation from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to the Church of England has grown into an international and ecumenical call to prayer, with participation spanning across 172 countries.

Church of Ireland encouragement for Thy Kingdom Come global prayer initiative

The Church of Ireland's Archbishops and its Council for Mission have endorsed the Thy Kingdom Come global prayer initiative which takes place each year from Ascension Thursday to Pentecost Sunday, and will this year run from 13th May to 23rd May.

The Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, the Most Revd John McDowell, remarked: "From fairly modest origins back in 2016, Thy Kingdom Come has grown from year to year, and has caught the imagination of many people, perhaps because of its simplicity and directness – praying that our own faith may be deepened, and that others who we love may come to share in the same faith. The wind of the Spirit would appear to be in its sails and I trust it will commend itself to many."

The Archbishop of Dublin and Primate of Ireland, the Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson, said: "Thy Kingdom Come captures the dynamism and energy that flows between Ascension and Pentecost. Disciples now as then are not left comfortless but are inspired to move from the departure of the Jesus they knew to the arrival of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. We in our day are called to witness and to serve and Thy Kingdom Come invites us to do so."

The Revd Adam Pullen, Chairperson of the Council for Mission and Rector of Stranorlar, in the Diocese of Raphoe, added: "We in our parish will be taking part in Thy Kingdom Come this year yet what, you may ask, is it?"

“It is taking time to pray over 11 days from Ascension to Pentecost, praying that God’s Kingdom will come on Earth. It is as simple as praying for five people, family and friends, that they will come to know Jesus, and have faith in Him. It is for all ages and all situations. Among the resources, there is *Cheeky Pandas* for the children, *Escape Room* for the youth and, for the rest of us, an app from Lectio 365 for phones and tablets, and even a paper journal we can follow each day.

“Whatever our age, our circumstance, or our level of confidence, we can all pray. I encourage you to take part and be encouraged that you are making a difference. It is amazing for me that the creator God asks us to join Him in His work: Thy Kingdom Come.”

Thy Kingdom Come is an international and inter-denominational prayer movement which started in the Church of England in 2016. Those who take part are encouraged to deepen their own relationship with Jesus Christ, pray for five friends or family members to come to faith in Jesus, and pray for the empowerment of the Holy Spirit so that the Church would be effective in its witness.

The Thy Kingdom Come website – www.thykingdomcome.global – features a prayer map where participants can pledge their support from where they live around the world, and includes a range of ideas, guides and resources to encourage prayer by children, young people, adults, families, schools, churches and small groups. Resources for churches include suggestions for

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prayer stations and 24–7 prayer, and prayer journals for parishioners.

Pope prays emergency workers in India find strength to persevere



As India faces a massive surge in new infections and deaths caused by COVID-19, Pope Francis said he was praying for all those affected by the huge health emergency.

With so many in India suffering, “I am writing to convey my heartfelt solidarity and spiritual closeness to all the Indian people, together with the assurance of my prayers that God will grant healing and consolation to everyone affected by this grave pandemic,” he wrote.

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Smashing global records, on May 5 more than 412,000 new cases and 3,980 deaths were registered in India in just 24 hours; however, health experts estimate the actual numbers are much higher due to unrecorded deaths and infections. The World Health Organization said India has accounted for 46% of global cases and 25% of global deaths reported in the past week.

In a written message sent May 6 to Cardinal Oswald Gracias of Mumbai, president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India, the pope said he was praying for all those who have become sick, for their families and caregivers and for those mourning the loss of loved ones.

“I think too of the many doctors, nurses, hospital workers, ambulance drivers and those working tirelessly to respond to the immediate needs of their brothers and sisters,” the pope wrote. “With deep appreciation I invoke upon all of them God’s gifts of perseverance, strength and peace.”

The pope also expressed his closeness to the nation’s Catholic communities and thanked them for their “charity and fraternal solidarity carried out in the service of all; I think especially of the generosity shown by so many committed young people.”

He prayed for the faithful who have lost their lives, including “the great numbers of priests and men and women religious,” and asked that “in these days of immense grief, may we all be consoled in the hope born of Easter and our unshakable faith in Christ’s promise of resurrection and new life.”

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Meanwhile, UNICEF has warned that the deadly surge in COVID-19 cases in India “is larger and spreading more rapidly than the first,” putting an enormous strain on health and critical care facilities.

“Urgent action is needed to avert further tragic loss of life,” it said on its website, appealing for funding to deliver urgently needed testing equipment, supplies and oxygen products and other services.

The pandemic’s first wave last year resulted in major cuts to public health services in South Asia, costing the lives of an estimated 228,000 children and 11,000 mothers, said George Laryea-Adjei, UNICEF’s regional director.

Essential health services, such as routine inoculations, have been disrupted and even risk being shut down with healthcare staff, equipment and facilities being diverted to addressing the ballooning pandemic, he said in a statement May 4.

Increasing numbers of children are being hurt by the pandemic as they lose parents and caregivers, witness traumatic scenes and lose vital health care, nutritional, education and support services, he said.

The current second wave throughout South Asia has the potential to cause immense devastation, Laryea-Adjei warned saying immediate assistance from the international community was “a moral imperative.”

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Ex-Moderator joins former IRA man on SDLP's unity group

A former Presbyterian moderator and an ex-IRA prisoner are among a wide range of members in the SDLP's New Ireland Commission launched today, which will contribute to the conversation about Irish unity, Suzanne Been writes in the Belfast Telegraph.

Richard O'Rawe, who was the IRA prisoners' public relations officer and drafted the statement announcing the start of their 1981 hunger-strike, will sit with former Presbyterian moderator, Dr Norman Hamilton, on the commission.

Mr O'Rawe said: "I'm looking forward to sitting down with people from very different backgrounds than my own to discuss the shape of a future Ireland. The commission is a very progressive body and hearing a range of perspectives will be invaluable.

"There is so much work to do. If there's a future referendum, people need to know what sort of Ireland they're voting for."

Dr Hamilton said: "I am delighted that the SDLP have reached out beyond the usual political activists to people of faith like me. I didn't hesitate for a second in agreeing to come on board.

"I will be sitting on the commission as a Christian minister, and not as an armchair politician."

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Dr Hamilton said he would “be surprised” if he didn't face criticism for joining the commission. “Some people will struggle to understand why a former Presbyterian moderator would want to be part of a discussion on Irish unity,” he said.

“It's important to remember that Presbyterians weren't always unionists. It may seem strange, and a bit unpalatable now, but historically Presbyterians have been on both sides of the constitutional question here. The United Irishmen were radical Presbyterians.”

Asked if he was a unionist or a nationalist, the former moderator said: “The unionism I come from is being changed by what is happening in London and Edinburgh. The underpinnings of the Union are being challenged by a rising English nationalism. It's no longer clear to me what a unionist is.

Dr Hamilton may head a policy think-tank on the role of faith communities in a new Ireland. “The Catholic Church's relationship with the Irish state has a difficult history so this would be important work,” he said.

Other panel members included ex-NIO political director Chris McCabe; former joint leader of the Green Party NI, Professor John Barry; Lilian Seenoi Barr of the North West Migrants Forum; victims' campaigner Jude Whyte; and disabled rights' activist Michaela Holywood.

Former Policing Board vice-chair Denis Bradley; civic activist Conor Houston; Dublin barrister Brian Barrington and Northern Ireland's former chief probation officer Breidge Gadd are also members.

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SDLP leader Colum Eastwood said: “This is the beginning of the real conversation about what type of society we want to be. Instead of platitudes and demands, the SDLP is rolling up our sleeves to work with people across our communities, to have the difficult conversations and to bring forward the practical detail that has been lacking from the constitutional debate.”

Courtesy the Belfast Telegraph 06.05.2021

Canon and sons plan ‘Mighty Hike’ for Macmillan Cancer Support

The Rev Canon Kevin Graham and his sons Jamie and Luke will take on the Macmillan Cancer Support ‘Mighty Hike’ along the north coast in June.

The Rev Canon Kevin Graham is in training for a marathon walk which will raise funds to support those living with cancer.

Kevin, rector of St Bartholomew’s, Stranmillis, and Connor Director of Ordinands, will be joined by his sons, Jamie, 23, and Luke, 18, on the Giant’s Causeway Mighty Hike along the north coast.

Cheering them on will be Kevin’s wife Cheryl, whose terminal cancer diagnosis last November has inspired the trio to take on this Macmillan Cancer Support challenge.

Kevin said: “I have run many marathons but those days are over, however the thought of walking one was quite



The Rev Canon Kevin Graham and his sons Jamie and Luke will take on the Macmillan Cancer Support 'Mighty Hike' along the north coast in June.

appealing. I spoke with my sons Jamie and Luke to see if they would accompany me.

“They agreed, so on June 26, regulations permitting, we will take part in the marathon walk from Ballycastle to the University of Ulster at Coleraine along the Causeway Coast – 26.2 miles to be exact!”

Cheryl received treatment for breast cancer in 2010, when Kevin was rector of Movilla Parish, Newtownards, Diocese of Down. In 2020, she underwent gene testing, which revealed she had the BRCA2 gene which, Kevin explained, means Cheryl is at high risk of other cancers.

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There were plans for surgery that would reduce the chances of any cancer spreading but, due to lockdown, these surgeries did not take place.

Last November, Cheryl was called for an MRI scan. A first biopsy indicated no cancer, but a biopsy of a second area of concern did not have the same outcome.

“We were told on November 19 that it was cancer,” Kevin said. “It came as a bit of a shock, we had the diagnosis and the prognosis in the space of a week.”

The prognosis, which the family received on November 26 last year, was that the cancer had metastasized and was terminal. Cheryl has undergone chemotherapy, and other treatments will follow.

“We are hoping that time will be added because of the treatment,” Kevin said. “We hope that the tumours will reduce in size and that will be a better starting point in terms of fighting the cancer. Other treatments will continue. This is palliative care, but not in the way people think, it is about management of the disease.

“Cheryl is very hopeful. The destination hasn’t changed, but hopefully the journey will be longer.”

Kevin said the family had been supported by Macmillan in 2010. “The pandemic has meant that support has not been so easily available this time. There is nothing we can do medically for Cheryl other than support her, but we can still help others who are facing cancer by raising funds for Macmillan.”

Since deciding to take on the marathon challenge in January, Kevin has completed more 1,400km in training,

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with his longest walk to date being 21km, which is a half marathon.

If you would like to sponsor Kevin, Jamie and Luke in this challenge for Macmillan Cancer Support, please visit their [Just Giving](#) page.

General Assembly to consider legislation on same sex marriage

This year's General Assembly of the Church of Scotland will bring forward prepared legislation which could ultimately allow Ministers of Word and Sacrament and Deacons to conduct same sex marriages.

Under this new proposed Act, brought forward by the Kirk's Legal Questions Committee, ministers and deacons would be one step closer to applying for a license to become authorised celebrants for same sex marriage ceremonies.

However, under the over-arching terms of the committee's proposed legislation, no-one would be required to participate in the solemnisation of, or be involved in the arrangements for, a same sex marriage unless they explicitly wished to do so.

Rev Dr Grant Barclay, the convener of the Legal Questions Committee, said:

“The committee recognises that there are diverse views on the subject of same-sex marriage. We are committed to

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ensuring that any resulting debates on this subject are held in a spirit of humility and grace, that the tone and tenor of discussions are civil, and that people are respectful of those who hold opposing views.

“The proposed Act makes clear that no-one who does not wish to be involved in the celebration of same sex marriage shall be required to do so, and this principle of protection and accommodation runs throughout the committee’s thinking in drafting the legislation.

“Following presentation of this draft legislation, it is for the Assembly to decide what, if anything, to do with it. The Legal Questions Committee offers no theological view on the issue, and it shall be for the Assembly to determine what steps are now taken.”

This comes following the 2017 General Assembly, when the Legal Questions Committee was instructed to undertake a study of the matters which would require to be addressed in any proposed future legislation. Following that year’s Assembly, a sub-committee was formed on same sex marriage. Members have since met regularly and, following a debate at the 2018 General Assembly, were instructed to prepare the proposed legislation being presented this year.

If adoption of the draft legislation is agreed by the Assembly, it will then be shared with all presbyteries for their consideration under the Church of Scotland’s Barrier Act 1697, with all responses to be returned to the Principal Clerk by no later than 31 December this year.



Funding boost for Dromore Cathedral

The Cathedral Church of Christ the Redeemer, Dromore is to share in a funding payout of £611,000 from the [National Churches Trust](#).

A £12,760 grant will help fund urgent repairs to the walls, windows and roof of Christ the Redeemer, safeguarding the heritage of the church and enabling it to continue to serve the local community.

Funding for the grant comes from the Department for Communities Historic Environment Division's Covid-19 Culture, Languages, Arts and Heritage Support Programme.

The project

The grant will support repointing walls, replacing cracked and crumbling sand stone detailing to window reveals, and provision of lead flashings.

The Very Revd Geoff Wilson, Rector and Dean of the Cathedral Church of Christ the Redeemer at Church of Christ the Redeemer said:

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“We are delighted to have been awarded this significant grant from National Churches Trust, particularly in these most challenging times for many churches. The funds will enable us to preserve the integrity of our wonderful church building from rainwater ingress as a place worship, a centre of mission and a place for silent reflection and private prayer.”

A total of 67 churches and chapels in England, Wales Scotland and Northern Ireland will benefit from the latest grants from the National Churches Trust, the charity supporting church buildings of all Christian denominations across the UK.

This is the first round of grants made by the National Churches Trust in 2021. Last year the Trust has awarded, or recommended on behalf of other funders, 260 grants amounting to £1.7 million.

The church

The Cathedral Church of Christ the Redeemer is a 17th century church, built on a site used for Christian worship for almost 1,500 years.

St Colman of Dromore set up a small ‘daub and wattle’ church on this site in 510 AD. Probably thatched with reeds from the River Lagan, which flows beside it.

Little evidence is available for the first 700 years of St Colman’s Church. There is no indication of either its size or style.

In the 12th century, the English King Henry II revised a system of dioceses and bishops, which covered the entire island of Ireland. One of those dioceses, named Dromore,

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took as its base this Cathedral Church. There had been bishops and abbots before then, but from this time the history becomes more complete.

A medieval church, about which no record exists, was destroyed in the late 1500's. I

t was King James I who, in 1609, issued letters Patent giving the Church of St Colman a new title and a new status: The Cathedral Church of Christ the Redeemer, Dromore (known as Dromore Cathedral).

That building was destroyed in 1641 by Irish Insurgents. A new structure, of which small portions are still visible, was built by Bishop Jeremy Taylor some twenty years later in 1661.

A narrow structure of around twenty feet wide and one hundred feet long was first built. This forms the base of the current tower aisle. A tower was then built, but soon dismantled.

The Percy aisle was added by Bishop Thomas Percy in 1811. This aisle sits at right angles to the Tower aisle, opposite the pulpit.

A semi-circular Sanctuary in memory of Jeremy Taylor was designed by Thomas Drew FRSA during the ministry of Canon Beresford Knox in 1870.

The Organ aisle and Baptistry were added at the same time creating an 'L' shaped building.

Finally, the church was made rectangular with the addition of the Harding aisle parallel to the Tower aisle in 1899.

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Books, Broadcasts, Resources and Webinars

Minds Matter with Patrick Regan & Sara Allen

How can churches support those struggling with their mental wellbeing? Register now for this evening Zoom session with Patrick Regan and Sara Allen from Kintsugi Hope. The event is part of the '[Strength for the Task](#)' season running in Down & Dromore diocese from 13–23 May.

Patrick and Sara will share the vision and purpose of [Kintsugi Hope](#), a charity which aims to create safe and supportive spaces for those dealing with emotional and mental health challenges.

Participants will also explore how the local church with its commitment to people's spiritual, physical and emotional wellbeing can come alongside those who are struggling.

Wednesday 19 May at 7.30 pm. [Click here to register](#)

Patrick Regan OBE is the founder and CEO of Kintsugi Hope. He is also the founder of urban youth work charity XLP and the author of five books. Sara Allen is the Kintsugi Hope Ni Ambassador.

Media review

I am so, so fortunate that I am still here,' says Tommie Gorman

Irish Independent

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[[] <https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/news/i-am-so-so-fortunate-that-i-am-still-here-says-tommie-gorman-40376729.html>]

Arlene's career as a juggler ends

RTE

[[] <https://www.rte.ie/news/analysis-and-comment/2021/0501/1213138-tommie-gorman/>]

Arlene Foster may preach unity now, but she led with division

The Guardian - Susan McKay

[[] <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/may/02/arlene-foster-first-minister-northern-ireland-protocol-unionism?fbclid>]

Sinn Féin's Martina Anderson and Karen Mullan stepping down

BBC News

[[] <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-56987289>]

NI 100: Tracing the history of the 100-year-old Irish border

BBC News

[[] <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-56806404>]

Coronavirus: Why some mosques are closed to women during Ramadan

BBC News

[[] <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-56937289>]



Pointers for prayer

Mighty God, in whom we know the power of redemption, you stand among us in the shadows of our time. As we move through every sorrow and trial of this life, uphold us with knowledge of the final morning when, in the glorious presence of your risen Son, we will share in his resurrection, redeemed and restored to the fullness of life and forever freed to be your people. Amen.

Living God,
long ago, faithful women
proclaimed the good news
of Jesus' resurrection,
and the world was changed forever.
Teach us to keep faith with them,
that our witness may be as bold,
our love as deep,
and our faith as true. Amen.

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Creator of the universe,
you made the world in beauty,
and restore all things in glory
through the victory of Jesus Christ.

We pray that, wherever your image is still disfigured
by poverty, sickness, selfishness, war and greed,
the new creation in Jesus Christ may appear in justice, love,
and peace,
to the glory of your name. Amen.

O God, your Son remained with his disciples after his
resurrection,
teaching them to love all people as neighbours.

As his disciples in this age,
we offer our prayers on behalf of the universe
in which we are privileged to live
and our neighbours with whom we share it....

Petitions... concluding with:

Open our hearts to your power moving
around us and between us and within us,
until your glory is revealed in our love of both friend and
enemy,
in communities transformed by justice and compassion,
and in the healing of all that is broken. Amen.

Holy God,
you have called us to follow in the way of your risen Son,
and to care for those who are our companions,
not only with words of comfort, but with acts of love.
Seeking to be true friends of all,
we offer our prayers on behalf of the church and the world.

Petitions... concluding with:

Guide us in the path of discipleship,

churchnewsireland@gmail.org

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so that, as you have blessed us,
we may be a blessing for others,
bringing the promise of the kingdom near
by our words and deeds. Amen.

Speaking to the Soul

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit is the source of them all. There are different kinds of service, but we serve the same Lord. God works in different ways, but it is the same God who does the work in all of us. A spiritual gift is given to each of us so we can help each other.

1 Corinthians 12:4-7 NLT

I often hear people being described as gifted. They may be a particularly able pianist, flower arranger or speaker. I totally understand what is being said, but it could be very misleading. It seems to suggest that there are two types of people – those who are gifted and those who are, sadly, not gifted at all. This passage makes it clear that every one of us is gifted. Whatever your age, strength, ability or disability, background or temperament you have got a unique gift that God, in his generosity, has given to you.

Our task is therefore to discover the gift that God has given to us and to make sure that we use it. People have often told me that they don't know what their gift is. If that's true of you let me offer you a very simple five step plan.

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Firstly, thank God for your gift. The fact is that God has given you one so you might as well thank him for it even though you haven't as yet worked out what it is.

Secondly, ask God what your gift is. Since he has gone to the trouble of giving it to you we can assume that he would love you to know what it is.

Thirdly, open your eyes. Look around you and see if you can spot what your gift is, because it is often very obvious. To be honest the problem is often that we know exactly what our gift is and would prefer that we had been given a different one.

Fourthly, if you still haven't worked out what your gift is, ask someone who knows you well. I suspect that they will be very clear what your gift is.

Then fifthly use this gift and remember to keep thanking God for it.

QUESTION

What is your gift and how are you using it?

PRAYER

Dear Lord, thank you for the gift that you have given me. Help me to use it well. Amen

