

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Open Day at The Hub at QUB

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Open Day at The Hub at QUB

If you are thinking about applying to live in a Chaplaincy community and would like to see the residences - both the Hub on Elmwood Av (C of I and MCI) and Derryvolgie Hall on Derryvolgie Av (PCI) are having OPEN DAYS this Saturday 1st April.11-1pm.

The Church of Ireland & Methodist Chaplaincy (aka The Hub Belfast) are now accepting applications for their student accommodation this September.

Situated on the Queen's University campus in south Belfast, the houses at 'the centre' have space for around 50 students every year. Young people from a range of church backgrounds have been making this place their home since the 1950s, and it is a great way to experience university or college as part of a supportive and welcoming community.

The chaplaincy has always placed a high value on living together, sharing meals, and a wide range of activities centred on exploring faith and life together. Students get to enjoy the unique on-campus houses, and the Church of the Resurrection and The Hub Café are also situated on-site.

Applications are welcome from students hoping to study at any university or college in Belfast. You can find out lots more information at the website:

<https://www.thehubbelfast.org> leading to -

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<https://thehubbelfast.org/student-accommodation/>

The Hub are also hosting an Open Day on Saturday 7th May – why not plan to go along?

People and places



First Down & Dromore Diocesan Bible Course graduates

Warm congratulations to the 19 graduates of the first Down & Dromore Diocesan Bible Course.

The course began last April with Module 1 and each of our graduates completed all three of the 10–week modules.

The diocese said it is indebted to Crosslinks mission partner, Josh Hooker who, with his wife Cathy, is on secondment to the diocese. Josh devised and taught the

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course, and brought the Bible alive in a new way for his students.

The following received their certificates from Bishop David during the last session of the course on Tuesday evening 28 March:

Jenny Montgomery, Victoria Frazer, Jackie Mitchell, Barbara Carlisle, Charmaine Robinson, Mark Robinson, Cyril Morrison, Gillian Morrison, Trevor Forde, Sylvia Matthews, Joyce McCormick, Margaret Holland, Stephanie Clarke, Brian Dawson, Eva Ferguson, Fiona Duff, Michael Neill, Eileen Givans and Hilary Whiteside.

The Diocesan Bible Course is moving to a two-year format and details of the new programme will be shared in the coming months.

Cathedral's Easter Family Fun in Lisburn City Centre

Don't miss Lisburn Cathedral's 'All Through History' weekend (7th-8th April) in Lisburn City Centre!

“Journey with us through history and help us celebrate Lisburn Cathedral's 400th Anniversary.

“We've lots of activities planned for Market Square and in the Cathedral. You'd be so welcome to come along and join in the celebration this Easter!”

Check out the poster in yesterday's issue of CNI for more details

Hazelbank Presbyterian Church celebrates 50th anniversary

The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Rt Rev Dr John Kirkpatrick was in Coleraine on Sunday 26 March 2023, joining minsters past and present of Hazelbank Presbyterian Church, along with church members and guests, to celebrate the congregation's 50th anniversary with a special service of thanksgiving.

The service was led by Hazelbank's Rev David Brown who was called to the church as its fourth minister in December 2014. Joining him for the service were his surviving predecessors, Rev Alan Johnston, who was minister from 2004-2013 and the son of the late Rev Sam Millar, whose father served the congregation for nearly 30 years from 1974 to 2003. Also present was Rev Professor Bill Addley, who began work on establishing the church in February 1971.

During the service the Moderator, who is also the minister of Portrush Presbyterian Church, preached on Philippians 2:13. "Since I became Moderator last June, I have visited and preached most Sundays, sometimes twice, and it is always a pleasure to be with God's people hearing their stories in their own place. Some have been special thanksgiving services like this, and as one of my predecessors said a while ago now, it doesn't really matter if we are celebrating a half century or a bicentenary; for what really matters is that for however long the gospel's preached, and people are being reached for Christ. It will be

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the same for First Armagh Presbyterian when I join them in May for their 350th anniversary.

Dr Kirkpatrick continued, “But there is something else to bear in mind as well, and I touched on it today. I took my text for the sermon from Philippians 2:13, when the Apostle



Paul writes “...it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfil his good purpose.” For what we are really celebrating is the faithfulness of God to us and what He has enabled us to do to fulfil His purpose. It is also the story of grace and how grace alone works – and inspires works. It has been a real blessing to experience that here in Hazelbank.”

Speaking after the service Rev David Brown said, “This afternoon has been a wonderful and very special occasion as we came together to give thanks to God for what He has done in and through Hazelbank over these past 50 years. As only the fourth minister of the congregation it is a privilege and an honour to be minister during this time in the life of our church, and to welcome the Moderator here today.

“For 50 years we have been a light on the hill, shining for Christ in the midst of the community where He has placed us. Therefore, while giving thanks for the past we continue to look to the future, excited at what God will do in our community as we continue to reach out through our Foodbank, for example, coffee mornings, Bowls Club, or our Hazelbank Toddlers on a Thursday. I very much look forward to seeing what God will do in the years to come.”

Next rector of Carlow Union

The Revd Paul Fitzpatrick, who is currently the Dean's Vicar within the Nenagh Union and Killaloe Group of Parishes in the Diocese of Tuam, Limerick and Killaloe, has been nominated to the Bishop of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory, to be the next rector of Carlow Union.

Bishop Wilkinson says, 'I'm delighted that the Revd Paul Fitzpatrick will be joining us in this Diocese. As a native of Carlow, he will be very familiar with the town and surrounding area. He is known to have an energetic approach to parochial ministry and a track record of delivering innovative projects which engage with the local community. I look forward to working with him as he serves the people of Carlow Union in the years ahead.'

The Revd Paul Fitzpatrick trained for ministry at St Kieran's College Kilkenny. Since his ordination in 1984, he served in a variety of parochial and chaplaincy contexts in the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin. Following studies at the Church of Ireland Theological Institute between 2017 and 2018, Paul began ministry within the Church of Ireland serving as curate of Limerick City Parish between 2018 and 2020. He is married to Betty, and they have a daughter Maebh.

Paul says 'It is a great privilege to be appointed the Incumbent of the Carlow Union of Parishes. I do so, having carried always within me, a great pride and appreciation for my town roots, history, education, faith, and Christian

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heritage. My family and I look forward immensely to returning home and to contributing to the rich and varied life of the Parishes, to learning, and to exploring further – collaboratively – the growth God has in store, as we serve the Lord faithfully together’.

New Assistant Priest in Zion



The Revd Caroline Casserly begins ministry as Assistant Priest in Zion parish on Palm Sunday.

Caroline was ordained deacon in 2013 and ordained priest in 2014 in the Diocese of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory to serve in the non–stipendiary ministry.

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She currently works as a director for a large not-for-profit housing association in Dublin and has been in this industry since 2015. Prior to this she worked for many years in the retail sector.

The Rector of Zion, the Revd David White said: “I am delighted that Caroline will be joining us here in Zion as she brings with her a wealth of experience and insight. I know that she will receive a warm welcome from this wonderful parish.”

Caroline is committed to building communities as well as the role of ‘hospitality’ in welcoming the stranger into our communities. She spent six years on the board of CMS Ireland which she truly valued. Outside of work, she loves exploring the outdoors, is passionate about music, enjoys travelling and spending time with her family.

She says: I’m really looking forward to this next journey in my ministry and serving in Zion. Revd David has shared with me that it is a great community, and I know from meeting some of the parishioners already, that it is a place of genuine welcome.”

SVP pleased at Government committing to rolling out hot school meals

SVP say they are very pleased to see Government committing to rolling out hot school meals to all primary school children. “This is an essential scheme that protects



children in Food Poverty, especially now when inflation is putting so much pressure on families.

“SVP hopes that funding for this vital scheme continues to increase, and that “we see a plan in place to tackle holiday hunger – children in food poverty need this support all year round.

“The next Budget must have strong focus on child poverty and deliver adequate increases in child income supports to complement this important initiative.”

Habitat ReStore Belfast is opening SOON!

Habitat has served communities in North and West Belfast in the past, and it has long been part of its strategy to launch ReStore in Belfast.

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Habitat said, “We are excited to bring Habitat ReStore to Crumlin Road.

“Support from local people, churches, companies and the wider community is important, we are thankful for support and encouragement which has helped us get to this stage and we look forward to all that lies ahead.

“Make sure to stop by when we open on Saturday 15th April at 9.30am!”

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News reports

Pope Francis will not preside over Easter services this year

Pope Francis will not preside over Easter services this year after being admitted to hospital with a respiratory infection, it emerged yesterday.

Cardinals will share out the pontiff's duties, starting on Palm Sunday, this weekend, and ending on Easter Sunday, one of the most important dates in the Christian calendar.

"We have divided up the various celebrations," said Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, the Dean of the College of Cardinals. The Pope was expected to attend the main Mass in St Peter's Basilica on Easter Sunday but was not expected to lead it, he added.

Last year, Pope Francis sat to one side during some Easter events because he was suffering knee pain, leaving it to senior cardinals to lead the Masses.

The Vatican said the 86-year-old had "rested well" after being taken to hospital on Wednesday night.

"This morning after having breakfast, he read some newspapers and resumed work," Matteo Bruni a Vatican spokesman, said in a statement. "Before lunch he went to the little chapel in his private apartment, where he gathered

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Preparations are being made in St Peter's Square for the Palm Sunday liturgy. It's a pity that Pope Francis is unlikely to be present.

in prayer and received the Eucharist," he said. The Pope was continuing to receive treatment, Mr Bruni added.

Messages wishing him a swift recovery poured in from around the world, with Joe Biden, the US president, urging attendees at a White House reception to "say an extra prayer" for Francis.

Sergio Mattarella, Italy's president, sent the Pope his "most affectionate wishes for a very speedy recovery".

Evangelical Anglicans create new City of London deanery chapter over CofE's gay blessing plans

A new deanery chapter for the City of London has been formed by a group of evangelical Anglican clergy opposed to the Church of England's plans to introduce gay blessings.

The announcement of the new Church of England City deanery chapter was made on the website of St Helen's Bishopsgate, one of the largest evangelical Anglican churches in London.

In a statement on its website, the church said, "After the House of Bishops' recent departure from the Bible's teaching on marriage and sexuality, new leadership structures are needed."

It added that the deanery chapter will "promote ongoing healthy Church of England ministry" and support the work of existing evangelical bodies within the CofE, including the Church of England Evangelical Council (CEEC).

The deanery chapter held its first meeting in the City of London on Monday, attended by 10 clergy.

Phil Martin, the vicar of St Botolph's Aldersgate, has been elected as the acting area dean and tasked with chairing meetings going forward.

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In a video message, he said, "Since the House of Bishops has departed from the Bible's teaching on marriage and sin, and therefore from the true Gospel of Jesus Christ, change is needed, new structures are needed."

Rev Chris Fishlock, senior minister of St Nicholas Cole Abbey, said that the members of the deanery chapter plan to meet together regularly.

He extended an invitation to "all clergy in the City of London who are compelled to resist all episcopal leadership from the House of Bishops on the grounds that their proposed Prayers of Love and Faith undermine the Church of England's doctrine of marriage such that we can no longer walk in partnership together".

In response to its formation, the Diocese of London issued a statement saying that the deanery chapter has "no legal substance".

"The Diocese was first informed a few hours ago that a group of clergy in the City of London is seeking to set up its own parallel, unregulated structures, outside of those of the Diocese of London and the Church of England. This unilateral move would have no legal substance," the diocese said.

"The initiative has been announced publicly, without discussion, at a time when constructive ongoing dialogue continues here in the capital, and across the country, following the House of Bishops' proposals in response to the six-year Living in Love and Faith process.

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"As a Diocese, we remain committed to working together through our differences, recognising the strength of our shared faith in Christ, and all that brings us together."

NHS pays £10K compensation to chaplain sacked after upholding Catholic marriage teaching

A London NHS Trust has settled a discrimination case with a Catholic chaplain who was ousted for answering questions from a patient on a psychiatric ward about the Church's teaching on marriage.

In response to a complaint made against Rev. Dr Patrick Pullicino, Vanessa Ford, the acting chief executive of South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust, Vanessa Ford, asserted that the trust's policy on equality and diversity "takes precedence over religious belief".

She has now accepted that "on reflection" her letter should have been "phrased differently" as "religion and belief is afforded exactly the same rights as the other eight protected characteristics".

She also assured Fr Pullicino that "there was no suggestion that the Trust felt you had told the patient that he would go to hell", as the complainant had alleged.

Fr Pullicino, 73, who had a distinguished career in the NHS as a consultant neurologist before he was ordained a priest

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in 2019, claimed he was subsequently bullied out of the chaplaincy role and told “he had no rights”.

With the support of the Christian Legal Centre, he sued the trust for harassment, religious discrimination, and victimisation.

The hearing was set to take place in July 2023 at Croydon Employment Tribunal but the trust has now settled the case by awarding him £10,000 in compensation “for perceived injury to feelings”.

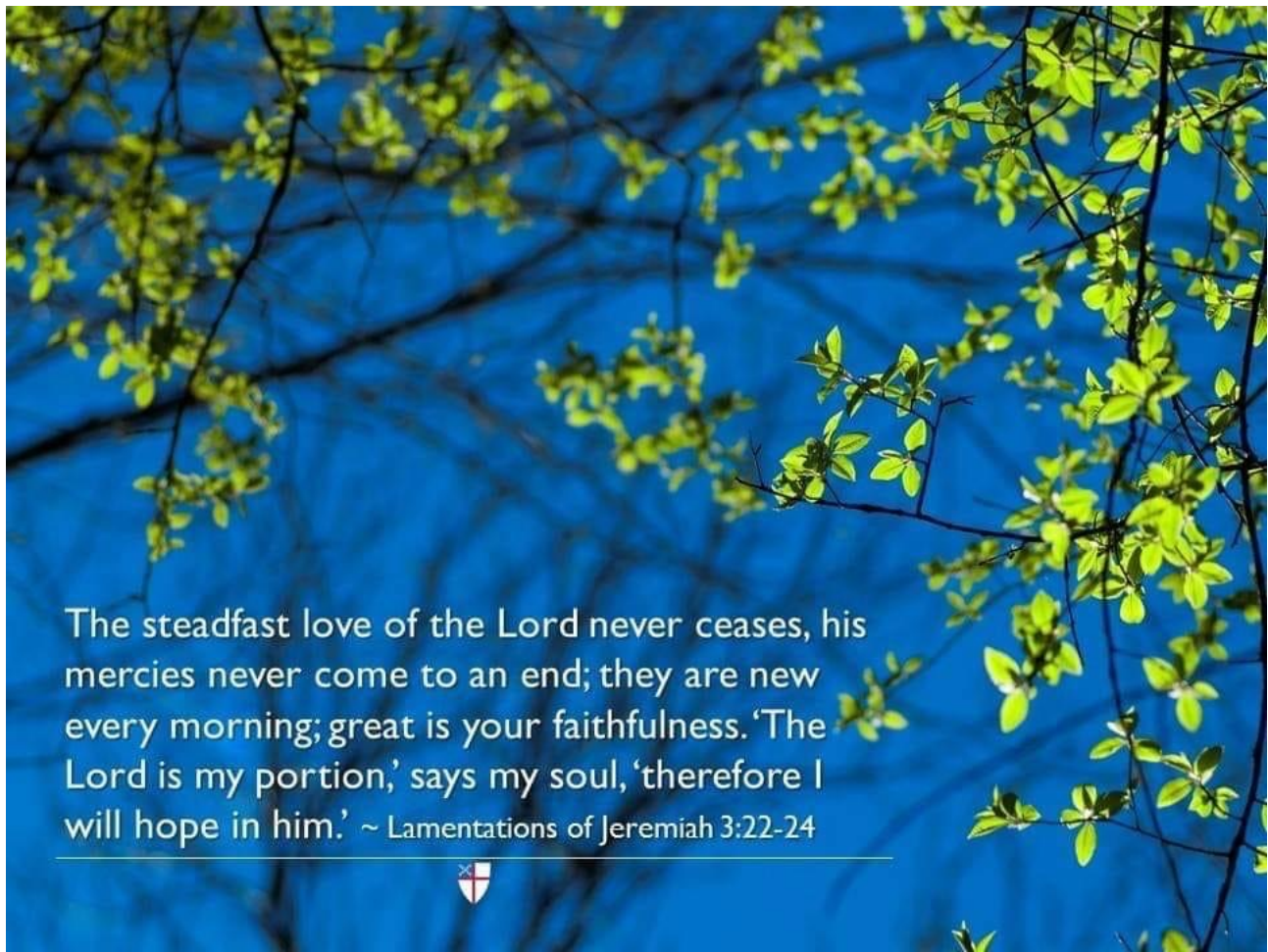
The figure falls within the middle band of Vento guidelines for “serious” cases of discrimination, according to the Christian Legal Centre

Rev Dr Pullicino, who a decade ago blew the whistle on the abuses carried out under the Liverpool Care Pathway, said he was “pleased and relieved” by the outcome.

He said a government inquiry was urgently needed, however, because it was necessary to “expose the NHS’s disturbing approach to the standard expression of Christian beliefs”.

Fr Pullicino said: “The documented downgrading of Christian belief by the chief executive undermines not only her NHS trust but also all the patients under her care as well as the chaplains of different faiths that she employs.

“There is a tendency throughout the NHS to force their patients to accept generic ‘spiritual’ care instead of giving support for their Christian beliefs. Christian faith is



particularly important in sickness, particularly when in danger of death.

“Limiting this is inhumane, in addition to being outside the law. Good, religion-specific chaplaincy support is under threat in the NHS but is essential in all hospitals. A government inquiry is urgently needed into restoring hospital chaplaincy to its rightful place.”

Andrea Williams, chief executive of the Christian Legal Centre, said it was “time to see an end to the ideology of equality and diversity riding roughshod over the Christian faith and treating it with such little respect”.

She added that Fr Pullicino’s ordeal revealed how “NHS chaplains risk punishment for responding to questions on human sexuality with standard biblical teaching”.

“They live under pressure to self-censor, affirm at all costs, or face the consequences. This has to change,” she said.

“We will continue to defend and contend to keep chaplains at the heart of our public institutions.”

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Church Leaders’ resources for Belfast - Good Friday Agreement Anniversary

The Leaders said - On 10th April 2023 it will be twenty–five years since the historic Belfast/Good Friday Agreement was signed. The signing of the Agreement was not the end of the journey to peace in Northern Ireland but marked simply the first faltering steps down a very long road to a new, brighter, and shared future. That road will continue to be shaped by tolerance and respect for our differences, and a recognition of the need for greater understanding and reconciliation. The principles of the Agreement were based on ‘partnership, equality and mutual respect’. As we reflect on how far we have travelled, we must fully appreciate the sacrifices that were made as we capture a vision for what lies ahead.

Mindful that people from different parts of the community will have different views and emotions about the anniversary of the signing of the Agreement, the Church Leaders Group



(Ireland) has prepared resources for use in times of private prayer and public forms of worship marking the anniversary, recalling the events of the past and looking to the future.

In the journey from Good Friday to Easter, from death to new life, the message of the Christian faith is a belief that love is stronger than hate and that the light of hope shines brightly in the darkness.

The current members of the Church Leaders Group (Ireland) are:

The Most Reverend John McDowell
Church of Ireland Archbishop of Armagh & Primate of All
Ireland

The Most Reverend Eamon Martin

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Roman Catholic Archbishop of Armagh & Primate of All Ireland

The Right Reverend Dr John Kirkpatrick
Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

The Reverend David Nixon
President of the Methodist Church in Ireland

The Right Reverend Andrew Forster
President of the Irish Council of Churches

The prayer resources are available as a PDF document and a Word document

Links at -

[\[https://www.ireland.anglican.org/news/11807/church-leaders-unite-in-prayer\]](https://www.ireland.anglican.org/news/11807/church-leaders-unite-in-prayer)

Church News Ireland

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