

Church News Ireland



**Image of the day – Passion of Jesus in Trafalgar Square
online today**

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The play is available online today. Web links in report below.

News reports

Passion of Jesus in Trafalgar Square

On Good Friday, 15 April, the renowned Wintershall Players return to the heart of London with their awe-inspiring full-scale re-enactment of The Passion of Jesus, performed in the shadow of the National Gallery. Supported by the Mayor of London, the open-air production was first produced in London in 2010.

With a cast of more than a hundred, all in resplendent costumes, along with horses, doves and a donkey, The Passion has now become a highly anticipated Easter fixture, attracting more than 20,000 people to its two London performances. (During the covid lockdown there were performances online)

The play was written by Peter Hutley, directed by Ashley Herman, and produced by Charlotte de Klee. The actor and artist James Burke-Dunsmore will once again take the role of Jesus. The rest of the company is made up of volunteer actors and stage crew from in and around London and the South East.

There are two performances of The Passion of Jesus on Trafalgar Square on Friday 15 April 2022 - at 12 noon and 3.15pm. Admission is free.



Those who can't make it to London for the performances will be able to watch The Passion live as both performances will be shown via a Facebook Live Stream - www.facebook.com/Wintershallplay. and available to watch on Wintershall's Youtube channel. www.youtube.com/user/wintershallplayers/featured

This performance contains a realistic interpretation of the crucifixion. Parental guidance is advised.

A big screen is used so wherever you are you can see and hear the acting. BSL interpreters will be available for both London performances.

The Wintershall Estate, in the heart of the Surrey countryside, is privately owned and comprises park land and a farm. Peter and Ann Hutley have lived at Wintershall for nearly 50 years and under their stewardship, the estate has expanded into a haven for wildlife, mature woodland and

farmland. It is also the home of the theatrical productions of The Life of Christ and The Wintershall Nativity.



The Wintershall production The Life of Christ was written and adapted from the Bible by Peter Hutley to mark the Millennium. Staged as a one-off production in 1999, it has been performed every year since. Production of the great Wintershall religious plays performed in Surrey and London has been passed to the next generation of the Hutley family, ensuring that the tradition stays alive.

In 2004, Peter received an MBE for services to the community, and was appointed a Knight of the Order of Saint Gregory, while his wife Ann was made a Dame. In

2012 Peter was awarded an OBE for services to Christian understanding.

For more information see: www.wintershall.org.uk/

Methodist church hit as South Africa's devastating floods leave 306 people dead

Devastating floods left 306 dead in the South African city of Durban, officials said on Wednesday, after hillsides washed away, homes collapsed, and more people were still feared missing, RTE news reports.

The heaviest rains in 60 years pummelled Durban's municipality, known as eThekweni.

According to an AFP tally, the storm is the deadliest on record in South Africa.

Provincial health chief Nomagugu Simelane-Zulu said: "The biggest worry is the number of bodies we are finding.

"Our mortuaries are under a bit of pressure, however we are coping."

The United Methodist Church in the township of Clermont was reduced to a pile of rubble. Four children from a local family died when a wall collapsed on them.

Other homes hung precariously to the hillside, miraculously still intact after much of the ground underneath them washed away in mudslides.

The storm forced sub-Saharan Africa's most important port to halt operations, as a main access road suffered heavy damage.

Shipping containers were tossed about, washed into mountains of metal.

Sections of other roads were washed away, leaving behind gashes in the earth bigger than large trucks.

"We see such tragedies hitting other countries like Mozambique, Zimbabwe, but now we are the affected ones," President Cyril Ramaphosa said as he met with grieving families near the ruins of the church.

South Africa's neighbours suffer such natural disasters from tropical storms almost every year, but Africa's most industrialised country is largely shielded from the storms that form over the Indian Ocean.

These rains were not tropical, but rather caused by a weather system called a cut-off low that had brought rain and cold weather to much of the country.

When storms reached the warmer and more humid climate in Durban's KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province, even more rain poured down.

"Some parts on KZN have received more than 450mm in the last 48 hours," said Tawana Dipuo, a forecaster at the national weather service - nearly half of Durban's annual rainfall of 1,009mm.

Rain continued in parts of the city on Wednesday afternoon, and a flood warning was issued for the neighbouring province of Eastern Cape.

The storm struck as Durban had barely recovered from deadly riots last July which claimed more than 350 lives, in South Africa's worst unrest since the end of apartheid.

Schools not affected by the floods re-opened Thursday but few students turned up. A teacher at a primary in Durban's Inanda suburb said only two of 48 pupils reported for classes.

The provincial government said the disaster "wreaked untold havoc and unleashed massive damage to lives and infrastructure."

The national police force deployed 300 extra officers to the region, as the air force sent planes to help with the rescue operations.

Days of driving rain flooded several areas, smashed houses and ravaged infrastructure across the city, while landslides forced train services to be suspended across the province.

The rains flooded highways to such depths that only the tops of traffic lights poked out, resembling submarine periscopes.

Torrents tore several bridges apart, submerged cars and collapsed houses. A fuel tanker floated at sea after being swept off the road.

More than 6,000 homes were damaged. See -

[[] <https://www.rte.ie/news/world/2022/0413/1292163-floods-south-africa/>]

Presbyterian Church thanked for cyclone support

A year ago, in the early hours of Easter Sunday, Cyclone Seroja swept across south east Indonesia and East Timor, causing loss of life and widespread devastation.

The Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) has long-standing partnerships with two churches in the areas affected by the cyclone, the Christian Evangelical Church of Timor (GMIT) and the Christian Church in Sumba. At the time, Presbyterian Moderator, Right Reverend Dr David Bruce, encouraged the Church to pray for its partner churches in the region and, if possible, to give practical support to the relief effort.

As a result of donations received from Presbyterian congregations and individuals across Ireland, PCI was able to send almost £20,000 (€24,000) to support its partner churches in their relief and rebuilding work following the Cyclone.

Thanking PCI for their donation and support, Reverend Dr Mery Kolimon, Moderator of the Christian Evangelical Church of Timor, said “When our disaster response team received a donation from PCI, we were moving from our emergency response phase into the rehabilitation and



reconstruction phase. Some aspects of the emergency response continued however, such as logistical assistance, and distribution of food and clothing.

“Our Seroja Team is now in the process of rebuilding four minister’s homes and two church buildings, but we are doing this in a way that offers a model for other congregations to follow in the construction of disaster-resilient and eco-friendly buildings.”

Dr Kolimon continued, “The locations for these examples of resilient, eco-friendly buildings were carefully chosen in order to maximise the educational impact. Funds donated by PCI have been used to partly fund this project, but have also helped provide groceries to the most vulnerable, and in funding other repair work to damaged churches. We are very grateful to the Presbyterian Church in Ireland for the

support that has been of great help to us in these difficult times.”

Reverend Alfred Samani, Moderator of the Sumba Christian Church in Sumba, also thanked PCI for their support writing, “Last year’s Cyclone Seroja disaster will never be forgotten by the people of Sumba. It happened so suddenly without any warning. Its impact was devastating, with people losing their houses, their agricultural lands, and their livestock.

“The Christian Church of Sumba contributed in helping people during this difficult time. In doing this we were supported by our partners including the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Please receive our heartfelt thanks for the support of your church. At this moment of commemoration, the first anniversary of the Cyclone Seroja disaster, we remember also the togetherness in helping each other. Thank you.”

Rev Uel Marrs, Secretary to PCI’s Council for Global Mission, commented, “Our relationship with our partner churches in Indonesia goes back half a century or more, and when we heard about the Cyclone we were of obviously saddened and distressed by the news, but were glad to be able to stand with them through this crisis in prayer and through practical support.

“I was also truly inspired by the account of one minister, Reverend Niko Selan, serving on Alor Island, who said that even with landslides early on Easter Sunday morning, which washed away nine homes, homeless members of his congregation still asked him to lead a simple short service of worship, which he did.

Mr Marris concluded by saying, “It is our prayer that this Easter many people around the world will gather to worship the Risen Lord Jesus Christ, despite enduring all kinds of trials and hardships. In particular, we pray that those suffering from natural disasters and war will seek and find refuge, strength and hope in God.”

Christian Aid launches “United By Hope” campaign

‘United By Hope’ is the new campaign by the international development charity, Christian Aid. The commercials will be broadcast on primetime TV and on social media from Good Friday, aiming to show how everyday things unite us even if injustice divides us.



The campaign cleverly blends people in Britain with people from other countries to echo each other’s lives, like playing football and doing the laundry. People such as textile

entrepreneur Ranjita in India and the Kothari family sharing lunch in North London.

Regardless of who or where we are, it makes the point we are all united by hope for the same things – like wanting to be together with family and friends.

Nick Georgiadis, Director of Fundraising and Supporter Engagement at Christian Aid, said:

“With this campaign’s emotional and empowering message of hope, we want to show people across the country how we’re standing together with our global neighbours to tackle global poverty and increase support for Christian Aid. The advert builds empathy by focusing on what connects us all, regardless of our circumstances. While injustice may attempt to divide us, the greater power of Hope unites us all.”

As well as the TV commercial airing on Good Friday, the ‘United by hope’ campaign will also be on YouTube, Facebook and Instagram. It will be supported by the launch of a social engagement initiative starting on April 10th entitled ‘Share Hope’.

Going live across Christian Aid’s social media channels, ‘Share Hope’ will encourage people to share messages and pictures of hope in the context of the war in Ukraine. The purpose is to flood social media with support during these worrying times.

For more information about the campaign, see the video https://youtu.be/sfH7_ObjQvk and visit caid.org.uk/hope

The campaign is running until the end of the month across media in London, Scotland and the North East of England.

Cork Choral festival expected to attract thousands to the county

The 67th Cork International Choral Festival was officially launched in Cork City Hall recently, where the full programme of events for the popular festival was revealed amid a chorus of music and song, Martha Brennan writes in Echo Live ie

Thousands of singers and visitors are expected to flock to the city from April 27 for five days of events.



The annual festival usually attracts around 5,000 national and international singers and 50,000 visitors, bringing in an estimated €10m to the local economy.

Organisers are expecting figures to be lower this year due to the current economic pressures, but are excited to welcome choral enthusiasts back after two years of online-only events.

“I’m very much looking forward to welcoming singers from all over the world back to Cork to hear them perform and show them the best that our city and county has to offer,” said festival artistic director Peter Stobart.

The five-day festival will open with a gala concert performed by the Sestina choir from the North at Cork City Hall on April 27.

Day two will feature a new programme inspired by TS Eliot’s *The Waste Land* at the Cathedral of St Mary and St Anne. The famous poem will be brought to life by British solo voice ensemble I Fagiolini, directed by Robert Hollingworth. It will include readings of poetry and classical music, including renaissance music and choral works from Eliot’s time.

Chamber Choir Ireland, under the baton of conductor Paul Hillier, will perform at St Finbarre’s Cathedral on April 29 and a professional a cappella group from Latvia, Latvian Voices, will perform at Triskel Arts Centre on the same day.

Cork City Hall will host the Fleischmann international gala concert on April 30.

A final gala concert with international music at Cork City Hall will close the festival on May 1.

Other competitions, fringe concerts, workshops, and free public performances will also take place in over 90 venues throughout the city and county, while the new Fringe Festival in Cobh will see two choral concerts in Cobh Cathedral and the Sirius Art Centre.

“There should certainly be a song for everyone over the May bank holiday weekend,” said Mr Stobart.

Easter Message from the Irish Church Leaders Group

On Good Friday when Jesus was crucified, we are told in the Gospel that darkness covered the whole earth. Our world this Holy Week is overshadowed with the darkness of war and conflict in Ukraine. We have witnessed through the media, the murder and mutilation of innocent civilians, the destruction of homes, shops and hospitals, and the displacement of millions of people. Families, who a matter of months ago were getting on with their everyday lives, are now literally walking through the valley of the shadow of death.

We stand united as Church Leaders in Ireland, with a message of support for the people of Ukraine. As we did when faced with conflict here in our own land, we call for people to pray for peace, to reach out to support the injured and bereaved, and to do all that they can to help and support the victims of unnecessary suffering. We recommit ourselves and our churches to do all that we can to help our sisters and brothers in their hour of need; and call on all world leaders and people of influence to work ever harder to

find a way to restore peace, bring about reconciliation and healing. We pray too that those who are intent on war, whose hearts are filled with hatred, may be transformed by the love of God.

During the last two years we have witnessed people coming together in support of one another to fight in a very different battle, against a microscopic virus. People adopted different forms of mitigation and made sacrifices to protect their neighbour from Covid-19. Our journey with coronavirus has taught us much and thankfully there are good signs of recovery. We are conscious too that for many the effects of the virus continue. Many have been very ill, others have suffered the pain of bereavement without family and friends being able to gather for the funeral, others live with the effects of the last two years on mental health or economic circumstances. We have all learnt much about our vulnerability and the fragile nature of human life.

May the Easter message of hope, found in the risen Christ, who banished the darkness and rose victorious in the light of a new dawn, be heard, and realised in Ukraine. May God's healing grace rest upon the world, its peoples and all who are suffering; and may the unconditional love of God be known, realised and shared, here and everywhere, now and in the days to come.

The Most Revd John McDowell - Church of Ireland
Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland

The Most Revd Eamon Martin - Roman Catholic
Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland

Good Friday April 15, 2022

The Rt Revd Dr David Bruce - Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

The Revd Dr Sahr Yambasu - President of the Methodist Church in Ireland

The Rt Revd Andrew Forster - President of the Irish Council of Churches

In the media

Thousands of cross-border trips made for AIL rugby

The Detail reports - In the 24 years since the Good Friday Agreement was signed, Ireland's top amateur club rugby teams have crossed the border roughly 4,000 times to play matches in the All-Ireland League (AIL).

The AIL consists of the island's 50 best men's club rugby sides. At present, 12 of these teams are from north of the border.

By the time the 2021/2022 season ends in a number of weeks, these 50 teams will have made a combined total of around 180 cross-border journeys for AIL fixtures alone.

That's squads of 20 players plus coaches, kitmen, physios, supporters, family members and alickadoos making these trips across the border to play and watch amateur rugby.

Such travel has led to thousands of people eating, drinking and socialising in corners of Ireland which they may have otherwise never visited, were it not for the AIL.

[[] <https://www.thedetail.tv/articles/thousands-of-cross-border-trips-made-for-ail-rugby?utm>]

Historic church adored by Everton fans the world over -

Liverpool Echo

The church predates the football ground by nine years and was originally a Church of England mission hall. In 1899 the foundation stone was laid to ...

[[] <https://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/news/liverpool-news/historic-church-adored-everton-fans-23625631>]

Pastor Rusty Thomas: US preacher who attended Lurgan rally claims 'powers of darkness ...

Belfast Telegraph

Northern Ireland Assembly election 2022 ... On Sunday, the religious leader, who founded a pro-life “Christian abolitionist ministry” called ...

[[] <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/politics/northern-ireland-assembly-election-2022/pastor-rusty-thomas-us-preacher-who-attended-lurgan-rally-claims-powers-of-darkness-are-pushing-ni-protocol-41544150.html>]

What were the Troubles that ravaged Northern Ireland?

National Geographic

Rooted in a legacy of colonialism, religious conflict, and political uncertainty, the Troubles would take 30 years, and thousands of lives, ...

[[] <https://www.nationalgeographic.co.uk/history-and-civilisation/2022/04/what-were-the-troubles-that-ravaged-northern-ireland>]

Finglas priest has seen 'too many murders', funeral of shooting victim hears

The Irish Times

Dozens of bikers staged a show of strength at the funeral of 29-year-old James Whelan (aka Whela) who was shot dead in a suspected gangland feud in Finglas, north Dublin.

The bikers did doughnuts, wheelies and revved before, during and after Mr Whelan's funeral at River Mount Parish church in Finglas.

Hundreds of local people lined the route to the church and were frequently enveloped in smoke from the motorbikes. Many of the motorcyclists wore "RIP Whela" t-shirts.

The funeral Mass was punctuated by the sound of motorbikes revving up outside the church while a Garda helicopter hovered overhead.

Hundreds of locals lined the route for the funeral cortege which was headed by a videographer screening the funeral live and a saxophone player.

[[] <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/crime-and-law/finglas-priest-has-seen-too-many-murders-funeral-of-shooting-victim-hears-1.4851821>]

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

'There is a green hill'.

Good Friday April 15, 2022

From this year's **Easter from King's**, which is broadcast on Saturday in the UK. The service is full of music and readings from Holy Week and Easter, including the beautiful hymn 'There is a green hill'. <https://bit.ly/efk22>

Ireland's famed Book of Kells now digitized for online viewing

The world famous Book of Kells, depicting Ireland's early Christian history, has been digitized for online viewing.

[[] <https://www.bignewsnetwork.com/news/272474632/ireland-famed-book-of-kells-now-digitized-for-online-viewing>]

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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Good Friday April 15, 2022