

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Cork goes Dutch

Image of the day

Cork goes Dutch

The Choir of St Fin Barre's Cathedral, Cork, have just returned from a five day tour to The Netherlands.

[Page 1 photo - St Fin Barre's Cathedral Choir at St Bavo's Cathedral, Haarlem. Eoin Murphy @artfotoglobal](#)

The first of three services was in Haarlem on Saturday Evening at St Bavo's Cathedral. The vast size of this building was very different to the scale of most of the churches in Ireland but the choir of thirty-eight singers with Peter Stobart conducting and Matthew Breen at the organ were more than capable of filling the space.

They sang in the Basilica of St Nicholas in Amsterdam on Sunday morning to a full church of appreciative worshippers. It was remarked by the Dean of the Basilica that the parts of the service which had to be sung in Dutch sounded as if the choir were fluent! The music was Kodály's 'Missa brevis' and 'Surgens Jesus' by Peter Philips, the text of which reflected the Gospel passage for the day, that of Jesus saying 'peace be with you' to the disciples.

From there the choir travelled by coach to the ancient university city of Leiden where they sang Evensong in the central church, the Hooglandse Kerk. They hold a monthly service in English and consequently, the people in the congregation had travelled some distance to hear it. Over



[St Fin Barre's Cathedral Choir at St Nicholas Basilica, Amsterdam with their Dean and Organist. Eoin Murphy @artfotoglobal](#)

two hundred people joined in with the singing of 'Thine be the glory' at the end of the service, which also included the 'Canticles in A' and 'Ye choirs of new Jerusalem', both by C. V. Stanford.

The thirty-one younger choristers and their supervisors visited Anne Frank's House and the Rijksmuseum as well as the Royal Zoo and the historic area Zaanse Schans, which is full of windmills and craft centres making clogs and cheese.

There were some very tired children on the return journey to Cork airport, but there were plenty of experiences and happy memories formed along the way.

People and places

Pioneer Ministry newsletter launched

The C of I Pioneer Ministry Leadership Team has released their first newsletter.

The Team comments, “The newsletter will regularly provide updates on what is happening with Pioneer Ministry in the Church of Ireland, and provide thought–provoking and inspiring insights into pioneering as well as share prayer points, with an invitation to join with Pioneer Ministry in seeking to follow God’s leading in this new movement to reach those with little or no connection to church.”

To sign up to receive the newsletter and all the latest news from Pioneer Ministry, please click here:

<http://eepurl.com/iob42s>

Four Methodist churches to merge in Bangor West

Falling numbers blamed as faith to leave city centre after almost 200 years

Report by Iain Gray in the County Down Spectator

FOUR Bangor Methodist churches are set to merge due to falling congregation numbers.

April 21, 2023

City centre landmarks Wesley Centenary and Queen's Parade churches, both of which date back to the 19th century, are to join together with Ballyholme and Carnalea on the latter's Rathmore Road site.

Officials say the amalgamation is an attempt to meet challenges including dwindling numbers and finances, aging membership with few children joining, decaying buildings and a reduction in the number of ministers.

North Western District

AN EVENING WITH.....
REV DAVID NIXON

 **THE METHODIST CHURCH**
IN IRELAND

**MCI President
experiences on his
Camino Walk**

**on Friday 21st April 2023
at 7.30pm**

**Omagh Methodist Church
ALL WELCOME!**





April 21, 2023

The change will effectively see three of the churches move out to Bangor West, meaning there won't be a Methodist presence in the city centre for the first time since the 1830s.

Leaders of the local church district are set to hold a special meeting to discuss and endorse the merger.

The amalgamation plans were unanimously passed by the councils of the respective churches, however, and are said to have close to 100% backing among the four congregations.

In a statement issued on behalf of circuit superintendent, Rev. Philip Corrigan, by local circuit secretary Phyllis Watters, officials say they hope to use the Bangor West merger as a platform on which to rebuild their numbers.

“We acknowledge that Methodism in its current state runs the real risk of disappearing from the Bangor area,” says the statement.

“It is our hope and prayer that in amalgamation we will become stronger and from that posture we hope to generate Mission, church growth and a replenishment of our hope and faith.”





Visiting Matana Diocese in Burundi

Pray for the diocese as they prepare to host a global visit from Roger Thompson (CMSI Partnership Coordinator) along with Rev Johnny and Mrs Emily Lowden (Glendermott parish) from 5-18 May. May this visit be a time of strengthening relationships and learning.

Forge Ministry Apprenticeship Scheme in Down and Dromore

Are you aged between 18 and 25 and have an active faith in Jesus? Why not apply to FORGE, the new Ministry Apprenticeship Scheme within the Church of Ireland

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Diocese of Down and Dromore which was launched in 2022.
Find out more here:

<https://www.downanddromore.org/news/2023/04/apply-to-become-a-forge-ministry-apprentice>

Accento concert in Ballintoy Parish Church

It was a "wunderbar"
evening of musical
delight last week.

Thanks was
expressed to new
German friends
Accento, who
performed and to

[Church News Ireland](#)





fellow musicians David and Lesley, and especially Russell who made it all happen. Those who came along and supported this fundraiser for the restoration project are most appreciated. it was a memorable night.

Walled City Passion - a story for our time

The centre of Derry-Londonderry came alive during Holy Week with mesmerising performances of Walled City Passion, a modern reimagining of the Easter story, Fiona Garrett writes

Now in its second year, this immersive street theatre production – masterfully directed and written by Jonathan

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Burgess – captivated audiences with its exceptional cast and a harmonious blend of ancient and modern storytelling techniques.



This year, the creative team behind the Passion also introduced a fringe festival which explored themes related to conflict resolution, peacebuilding and community relations.

During twice-daily performances of the drama, on the Thursday, Friday and Saturday of Holy Week, Stephen Bradley exuded serenity and depth in his breath-taking portrayal of Jesus, while Charlie Bonner's 'devilishly ordinary' devil provided a relatable counterpoint. The impressive supporting cast included local star Dylan Reid as a cunning Judas and Andy Porter as Caiaphas. Margaret Hannon's moving portrayal of the crippled woman who received the gift of walking from Jesus left some audience members in tears. Local performing arts students played a crucial role as extras, adding depth and authenticity to the performance.



The drama's visual elements were equally impressive, notably Helen Quigley's exceptional costume design and the use of striking props such as a crown of thorns and realistic stigmata makeup effects.

Walled City Passion is a stunning and unforgettable theatrical experience and, as the community embraces the drama, it is destined to become an eagerly anticipated annual event.

The 'Passion + Fringe Festival' offered a profoundly moving and thought-provoking experience for all who attended. Its first event, in St Augustine's Church, delved into themes of peacebuilding, dialogue and the power of mediation in conflict resolution, with heartfelt contributions from Michael

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Doherty MBE and Brian Dougherty MBE. The former shared a chilling account of witnessing violence during the Bloody Sunday march, drawing connections to Jesus's arrest and his message of non-violence. Brian Dougherty touched on the "Orwellian attitude" to politics in the region and the psychological impact of the siege mentality still present in some Londonderry communities. Smart leadership, hope, and building social capital were identified as core themes for the event.

The second session, held at the First Presbyterian Church, featured Bishop Andrew Forster, Rev Canon Judi McGaffin and writer Tony Macaulay. Their reflections on the Passion Play highlighted its emotional impact and the lessons it offered about fear, disappointment and the human capacity for redemption.

At the fringe festival's third session, in Áras Cholmcille – St Columba Heritage Centre, a panel of distinguished trauma therapy professionals explored the human experience, focusing on trauma and healing. Prof. Derek Farrell MBE, Prof. Paul Miller, and university lecturer Lorraine Knibbs explored the importance of addressing trauma at both individual and societal levels, as well as the role of the Walled City Passion in facilitating conversations around this crucial topic.

Their discussion centred on the crucifixion scene from the passion play. The panellists emphasised the importance of not sanitising the brutality of trauma, and the need for open dialogue, professional support and community engagement in overcoming the lasting impacts of trauma.



The fringe festival's concluding session, the Walled City Passion Symposium, provided an opportunity for attendees to meet and converse with writer/director Jonathan Burgess and Archdeacon Miller, who first conceived of Walled City Passion.

Jonathan explained that what drove him as a producer was shining new light through old windows. "I like taking stories which people have expectations about and then burning them about and making them into something else."

Archdeacon Miller (Photo next page) explained that he had previously seen a Passion play in Manchester which had been inspired by the Manchester music scene.

It inspired him to do something "like it but different". He said the appeal of playing the new drama out on the famous city walls came from the fact that years ago the walls were regarded as a 'no-go area'.



The 'Passion + Fringe Festival' was a truly enriching and inspiring experience for all who attended. The event offered a unique opportunity for participants to engage in meaningful conversations on topics such as peacebuilding, trauma, and the power of artistic expression in promoting healing and understanding. The event served as a potent reminder of the importance of hope, leadership and the power of human connection in overcoming conflict and building a more compassionate society.

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In the media

GAFCON and the Puzzle Pieces of Anglicanism - Analysis by Kirk Petersen in The Living Church

Is the Anglican Communion going to break apart?

The name “Anglican Communion” has enough brand equity that it will survive. The remaining questions include: Which faction will have custody of the name? And within the revised Anglican Communion, what will be the role of the Archbishop of Canterbury?

Archbishop Foley Beach — who leads both GAFCON and the Anglican Church in North America — put a stake in the ground in his remarks at the opening ceremony Monday evening.

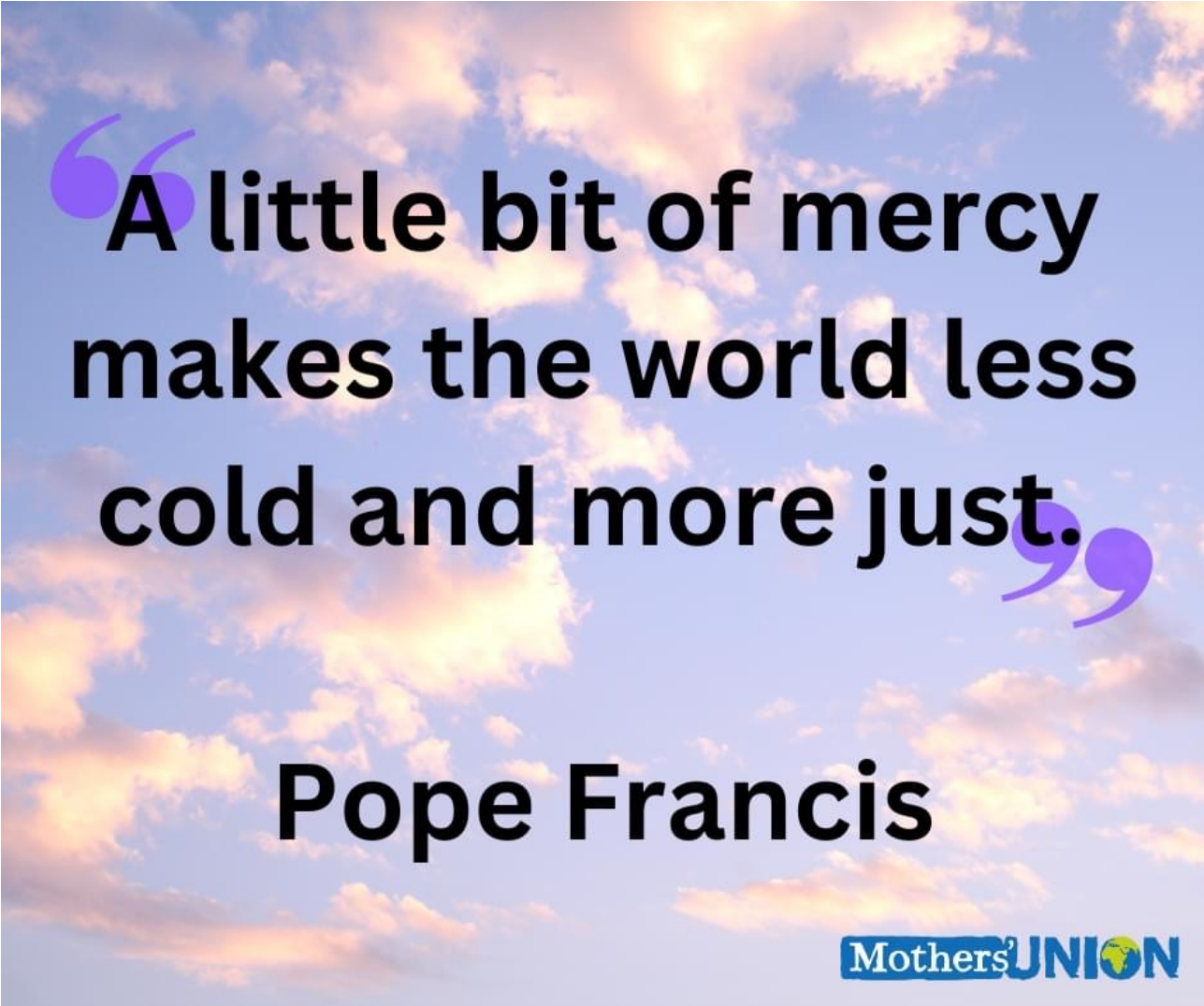
“Sadly, and with broken hearts, we must say that until the Archbishop of Canterbury repents, we can no longer recognize him as the first among equals, spiritually. It’s time for the whole Anglican Establishment to be reformed anyway. I mean, why does a secular government of only one of the nations represented in the Anglican Communion still get to pick the spiritual leader of the Anglican Communion? This makes no sense in today’s post-colonial world.”

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There's a lot to unpack in those brief sentences.

Anglicanism was spread throughout the world by colonial England and the Church of England, and the Archbishop of Canterbury is both head of the Church of England and first among equals among the primates of the provinces of the Anglican Communion.

One by one, Foley called on eight provinces of the Anglican Communion to "repent" of their various levels of acceptance of same-sex relationships. In addition to the Church of England, they were the Scottish Episcopal Church, the Church in Wales, the Episcopal Church of Brazil, the Anglican Church in New Zealand, the Church of Australia, the Anglican Church of Canada, and, of course, the U.S.-



**“A little bit of mercy
makes the world less
cold and more just.”**

Pope Francis

Mothers' UNION

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based Episcopal Church, which has dioceses in a dozen other countries.

From the perspective of the dominant ethos in the Episcopal Church, the very idea of repentance in this context is a non-starter. One does not repent of what one believes is an important advancement of social justice and civil rights.

Most of the rest of Beach's remarks concentrated on spiritual themes rather than on church politics. The political discussion resumed in earnest the following morning, in the first plenary business session.

The first keynote speaker was Glenn Davies, who retired in 2021 as Archbishop of Sydney, the most conservative diocese of the Anglican Church of Australia. In 2022 he was named Bishop of the Diocese of the Southern Cross, a GAFCON entity that currently has only a handful of churches, but which is envisioned as an alternative province for conservatives who leave the fracturing Anglican Church of Australia.

Davies traced the milestone events that gave birth to GAFCON, beginning with the sexual revolution of the 1960s, including "the invention of the contraceptive pill, so that sex had no responsibility."

Davies's narrative of many other changes regarding human sexuality led to 2022, when the provinces of Nigeria, Rwanda, and Uganda boycotted the delayed Lambeth Conference, as they had done in 2008. But the other major conservative Anglican entity, the Global South Fellowship of Anglicans (GSFA), sent leaders and delegates to Lambeth

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to try to revive the spirit of Lambeth Resolution I.10, which declared in 1998 that homosexuality is “incompatible with Scripture.”

“But they were thwarted,” Davies said.

That was in August 2022. Davies said Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby urged the provinces to “keep walking together.” But then, in October, Queen Elizabeth II appointed (and Archbishop Welby commended) a man in a same-sex relationship to be the dean of Canterbury Cathedral — “the mother diocese of the mother church of the Anglican Communion,” Davies said. “The mother has abandoned her children.”

Then in February 2023, the Church of England’s General Synod, “with the support of 80 percent of the bishops, approved same-sex blessings,” he said. In so doing, “the Church of England, from which we learnt the gospel,” had “abandoned the faith.”

Primates from GSFA and GAFCON are consulting together in Kigali, and a lay delegate at a later session drew fierce applause by urging a merger of the two groups. In terms of doctrine, GSFA and GAFCON are indistinguishable, but their tactics have differed.

GSFA’s effort may now be over. GSFA declared on Ash Wednesday that “we believe it is no longer possible to continue in the way the Communion is. We do not accept the view that we can still ‘walk together’ with the revisionist provinces.” That declaration has been cited with approval by multiple GAFCON speakers and official statements.

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Wild Musings by Éanna Ní Lamhna

About the Book

In her inimitable and engaging style, Éanna Ní Lamhna brings us on a stroll through our natural world, celebrating its beauty and highlighting the importance of protecting it. Touching on a range of topics, from biodiversity to becoming nature positive, her words and photographs inform and delight – and above all encourage us to step outside and muse wildly.

About the Author

Éanna Ní Lamhna is a biologist, environmental consultant, radio and television presenter, author, educator and Irish Times contributor. Her previous books include *Wild and Wonderful* (O'Brien Press, 2004), *Straight Talking Wild* (Town House, 2006), *Wild Dublin* (O'Brien Press, 2008), and *Our Wild World* (O'Brien Press, 2021).

Wild Musings, A Celebration of the Natural World by Éanna Ní Lamhna

Paperback. Pages: 112. Size: 180 mm x 130 mm
Publisher: Beehive Books. Price: €14.99. from Veritas bookshops

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Reviews and Endorsements

'Éanna is the Greek chorus of Irish nature – observing, celebrating, advising and cautionary/warning. She has enriched our lives and enlivened our experience of nature. Wild Musings is a worthy testament.'

Manchán Magan, documentary filmmaker and author, Listen to the Land Speak (Gill Books, 2022)

'Éanna Ní Lamhna is a force of nature and this book is an essential read for the time we're living through. The world needs these wild musings.'

Róisín Ingle, Irish Times journalist

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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