

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – St Doulagh's Church

Image of the day



St Doulagh's Church

St Doulagh's Church at the Church of Ireland, United Parishes of Malahide, Portmarnock & St. Doulagh's was open on Saturday as part of Heritage Week.

It will also be open on Wednesday next from 12pm to 5pm. It was a busy day with many visitors. Credit to The Friends of St Doulagh's and all who worked so very hard to welcome all who came to what is one of the most historic churches in The United Dioceses of Dublin & Glendalough.

News

Ballywalter's breakfast for Guatemala

Christian Aid has confirmed the details of its annual Christian Aid Week 'thank you event' at which the charity will reveal the total sum raised by its volunteer fundraisers and celebrate their success in bringing hope to people living in poverty and crisis around the world.

One of those due to attend is Marilyn Armstrong who helped raise around £1,000 for Christian Aid Week with a cooked breakfast event hosted by Ballywalter Parish.

Marilyn (pictured 2nd left) was among more than a dozen parishioners of Holy Trinity Church in Ballywalter who prepared and served 100 cooked breakfasts on Saturday 17 May at the parish hall on the edge of the County Down village. The event, which was open to the public, was led by Marilyn and Carol Hall with the support of the Rector, Revd Adrian Green. Ballywalter Parish began holding their annual Christian Aid Week breakfast in 2016, since when they have raised almost £7,500 for the charity.

Christian Aid's celebration event will be held on Sunday 28 September from 2-4.00pm at St John's Newtownbreda Presbyterian Church on Belfast's Ormeau Road. It's expected that as many as 80 people will attend the event to enjoy refreshments and to learn more about the projects which will benefit from their fundraising.

Christian Aid Week, which ran from 11-17 May, is believed to be the UK and Ireland's longest running fundraising campaign, having started in 1957. This year's appeal focused on Guatemala where the climate crisis is bringing harsh droughts and blistering heatwaves, leading to hunger and poverty among Indigenous communities.

Forty per cent of Guatemala's Indigenous community live in extreme poverty, many without mains water, electricity or network coverage. Most rely on rain-fed farming to make their living but as the climate crisis brings longer and harsher droughts, crops are failing, and hunger follows quickly. Across Guatemala, 46% of children aged under five experience stunting of their growth due to a lack of nutrition in their diet.

Since 2011, Christian Aid has been funding the work of its partner in Guatemala, Congcoop which offers training and tools so that farmers can grow drought-resilient crops, conserve water and create organic fertiliser.

Christian Aid Ireland Chief Executive Rosamond Bennett thanked Ballywalter Parish and all participating churches for their fundraising efforts. She said: "We are hugely grateful to everyone for the gift of their time and for their generous donations. Christian Aid Week is one of the biggest acts of Christian witness on these islands. It's only with the support of churches that we can reach people living in poverty and crisis."

To make a donation to this year's Christian Aid Week appeal, please visit caweek.ie



Have choir will travel

Belfast Community Choir began in 2013 with just one singer in a living room and has since grown into a vibrant, welcoming group that celebrates the joy of singing together.

The choir was created to bring people together—those looking for connection, those who never had the chance to learn music, and those who simply love to sing.

From those small beginnings, the choir has gone on to perform in remarkable venues including St Anne's Cathedral and the Grand Opera House, and their adventures have even taken them to Rathlin Island for a weekend of sea

shanties with the Causeway Shantymen, filling the island with music and joy.

The choir now has a new ambition: to sing in every county in Ireland, connecting with choirs along the way and sharing the belief that music is for everyone—children and adults alike.

They have already ticked Armagh where they were invited by the Charles Wood Summer School and they sang at the Bandstand for a couple of hours on Saturday afternoon.

Irish Presbyterian Moderator 'honoured' to preach at Malawi anniversary event

The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church (PCI) in Ireland preached on Saturday at the opening of celebrations for the Livingstonia Mission's 150th anniversary in northern Malawi.

The Right Rev Dr Trevor Gribben addressed thousands at Mzuzu football stadium in the northern Malawian city of Mzuzu.

It marked the launch of three days of events hosted by the Synod of Livingstonia of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP), one of PCI's global mission partners.

During the weekend Dr Gribben was due to meet Malawi's President, Dr Lazarus Chakwera, who attended the day's main celebration as the guest of honour.



Speaking from Mzuzu, 220 miles north of the capital Lilongwe, before the celebrations began, Dr Gribben said the invitation was a great honour.

“I only found out recently that the Synod of Livingstonia had decided to do our church, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the great honour of inviting me as Moderator to preach at the opening of the celebration,” he said.

“That is a real privilege, and on behalf of PCI, I am very thankful for the opportunity to share God's word with so many brothers and sisters in Christ at this special time for the Synod and the CCAP.

“The theme of the celebration, 'Tell the people to move forward,' is taken from the Book of Exodus, and the Moderator of the Synod will preach on this,” he said. “I will

be preaching on a wonderful passage in the Book of Joshua about moving forward with the Lord in the journey of faith as we travel together with our brothers and sisters in the Synod of Livingstonia.”

PCI's relationship with CCAP began in the mid-1950s, and in 1958, Rev Bill Jackson became PCI's first missionary to Malawi. Since then, more than 90 men and women from PCI have served there.

Dr Gribben is accompanied on the 10-day visit by Rev David McCullagh, minister of Annalong Presbyterian Church and convener of PCI's Global Mission Partnership Panel.

The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church

Mr McCullagh, who served with Scripture Union in Malawi from 2013 to 2018, said that partnerships were an important part of local and corporate church life. “In recent years, many individuals and teams from PCI congregations have made short mission trips to Malawi,” said Mr McCullagh.

“These celebrations will also afford the opportunity for the Moderator to deepen our ties with the country and Church of Central Africa Presbyterian in particular.”

Dr McCullagh said that during the visit, they will meet Synod of Livingstonia leaders, tour Synod projects, hold talks with other CCAP leaders, and visit PCI-supported partners including Scripture Union, the Bible Society, and the Student Christian Organisation of Malawi.

Dr Gribben spoke warmly about returning to the country. “It is great to be back in Malawi, especially in the northern part of the country where I have not been before,” he said.

AUGUST 18, 2025

He added: “Our Church and CCAP have a tremendous heart for mission, and it is appropriate that we look back at what has been, celebrating and giving thanks to God for the missional contribution down the decades, as the Synod is doing.

“It is also a time to look forward, a time of strengthening our relationship with the church in Malawi, and the ministry and mission we share in the Lord, standing together in prayerful solidarity, as we bring hope and a future in Jesus.”

Education

BRAs Oxbridge entrants



Well done to our four Oxbridge offer holders who secured places at Oxford and Cambridge beginning in September.

Heading to Cambridge is Megan Flood (Sullivan Upper Prep) who will read German and History at Sidney Sussex College, and Emily Warnock (Cavehill Primary School) who will read Law at Clare College.

Making their way to Oxford is Clara Walsh (Our Lady of Lourdes PS) who will read Classics at St. Hilda's College, and Niall Blaskett (Our Lady of Lourdes PS) who will read Music at Oriel College.

Congratulations to our pupils and their families for this outstanding achievement and well done for the hard work that this outcome represents.

We wish our young alumni every success as they embark on their university careers and are confident that they will represent Belfast Royal Academy with excellence and commitment.

Cookstown Youth Choir

Cookstown Youth Choir. Founded in 2008, CYC was established to unite young people from diverse backgrounds across the community.

Through vocal training and performance opportunities, the choir nurtures musical talent and builds confidence in a



supportive, creative environment. Over the years, they have enjoyed great success, performing alongside acclaimed artists such as The New York Tenors, Irish soprano Deirdre Masterson, and Peter Corry. On Saturday past they were invited to sing for the Charles Wood festival in Armagh.

Outdoor Primary School in Greystones, Co Wicklow

It may seem radical to send children outdoors year-round in rain, frost or sunshine, but an increasing number of parents are doing just that.

In a time of digital distraction and rising anxiety levels, outdoor schooling offers something many people want for their kids – slow, grounded learning rooted in the rhythms of nature.

“If we only teach children to go outside on sunny days, then we teach them to only look forward to those days. That’s not very good for anyone’s mental health,” says Louise Nelson,

AUGUST 18, 2025

principal of
the Outdoor
Primary
School.

Nelson will
open the
school's
doors for
the first time
this
September
in
Greystones,
Co Wicklow.
Students
will learn
the skills of
the Irish
national
curriculum
but with a

key difference – they'll be learning outdoors. It's the first
school of its kind in the State.

"Any lesson that can be taught indoors, you can do outside
as well," says Nelson. "You can do maths outside with pine
cones for example. And the weather is just another
teachable resource.

"While working in conventional primary schools in the past,
I've had sixth class kids come to school in February wearing
thin hoodies and ankle socks and then wonder why they're
freezing at break time on the yard, turning blue.



**A 52-acre fully outdoor
primary school to open: 'Any
lesson that can be taught
indoors, you can do outside'**



“And by contrast, at an outdoor creche I worked in, I’ve also seen kids react to rain by just getting their coats and going back out to play, without being told to do so. They’ve learned that’s what you do. It’s not an issue.” - Irish Independent

Cathedral Calls

VJ Day commemoration in St Macartin’s Cathedral, Enniskillen

A service to commemorate VJ Day took place on the morning of VJ80 in St Macartin’s Cathedral, Enniskillen led by Revd Edwin Aiken, assisted by the Bishop of Clogher, Right Revd Dr Ian Ellis and Monsignor Peter O’Reilly.

The lessons were read by Viscount Brookeborough, His Majesty’s Lord Lieutenant for Fermanagh and Major Nigel Knox.

The Act of Remembrance was led by Major Jack Dunlop. Wreaths were laid in the Regimental Chapel by Major Jack Dunlop and Lt Col Mark Scott.

The organist was Mr Glenn Moore; the Bugler was Ranger Gregory Lutton and the Piper was Sergeant Trevor Bradley.

There was a large turnout of members of the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers Association and other people with family connections to service in the Far East.

TRHs The Duke & Duchess of Edinburgh attended an 80th Anniversary of VJ Day commemoration service at the Scottish National War Memorial in Edinburgh.

TRHs also attended a Performance of The Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo off the Edinburgh Castle esplanade. Dating back to 1949, the annual Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo is a world-renowned military performance of music, dance, military precision, and technology, all set against the backdrop of Edinburgh Castle.



St. Cecilia's Day fundraiser at Belfast Cathedral for Corrymeela

AUGUST 18, 2025

This St. Cecilia's Day, why not join us for an unforgettable evening of music at Belfast Cathedral.

This once-in-a-lifetime musical experience showcasing composer Joanna Forbes L'Estrange's breathtaking choral reimagining of Vivaldi's The Four Seasons, will be raising funds for The Corrymeela Community.

Tickets are £15 and are available now:
<https://square.link/u/r9jfcn85>

Events

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Recitals at St Ann's, Dawson St., Dublin

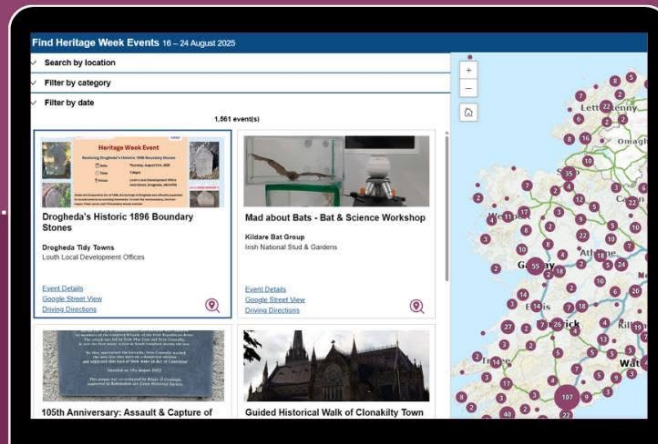
Thursday, August 21st, 2025 | 1:20 PM Adam Parrish (Piano)

A classically trained pianist, organist, and composer, Adam Parrish has performed internationally and collaborated with



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AUGUST 18, 2025

renowned artists. His recital promises an exciting mix of classical and contemporary works.

Thursday, August 28th, 2025 | 1:20 PM Kandinsky Quartet (String Quartet)

The Kandinsky Quartet, on their debut tour of Ireland, will perform a captivating programme that includes works by Mozart, Schubert, Schumann, and contemporary composer Caroline Shaw.

Perspective

The foundation of Stanford University in 1891 in Palo Alto, California

One quiet morning in the late 1800s, a plainly dressed couple stepped off a train in Boston and made their way through Harvard's ivy-covered campus.

They didn't arrive with fanfare or titles—just a sincere purpose and heavy hearts. The woman wore a simple cotton dress, and her husband a modest suit. Without an appointment, they humbly asked to speak with the university's rector. The secretary, unimpressed by their rural appearance, let them wait for hours before finally—perhaps out of irritation—passing the request along.

Reluctantly, the rector agreed to see them for a few minutes, expecting little more than idle chatter. When the couple

entered, he sized them up immediately: just another pair of country folk out of place among Harvard's refined halls.

But then, the woman spoke with calm clarity. She explained they had lost their beloved son, who had studied at Harvard for a year and had cherished his time there. In his memory, they wanted to make a donation—perhaps even fund a building. The rector almost laughed. “A building?” he asked, masking his disbelief. “Do you have any idea how much a building costs? We’ve poured more than \$7 million into this place.” He dismissed them with polite finality, certain they had no idea what they were talking about.

The woman turned to her husband with quiet resolve. “If that’s all it takes to start a university,” she said, “why don’t we just build our own?”

And that’s exactly what they did. The couple—Leland and Jane Stanford—went on to establish Stanford University in 1891 in Palo Alto, California, naming it after their only son, Leland Stanford Jr. What Harvard overlooked became one of the world’s greatest institutions.

The story stands as a powerful reminder: greatness often walks in quietly, without titles or status, and the people most underestimated sometimes leave the most enduring legacies.

In the media

This is a follow-up to a report of an event which was carried in CNI. There was much more to this true story as presented by Connla Young in The Irish News...

One of Ireland's best known Catholic bishops will return to his mother's home parish on Friday to mark the centenary of a national shrine his grandfather helped build.

Bishop of Derry Donal McKeown will be joined at a special Mass by his Down and Connor counterpart Bishop Alan McGuckian to celebrate the centenary of the National Shrine to Our Lady of Lourdes at Moneyglass in Co Antrim.

Bishop McKeown's grandfather James McMeel was head stonecutter when the National Pilgrimage Church of Our Lady of Lourdes was built a century ago.

Opened on August 16, 1925, the landmark church, which is in the Diocese of Down and Connor, immediately became an important centre of worship for people from across Ireland.

On the third anniversary of its opening around 10,000 people made their way to the site, including 2,000 members of the Ancient Order of Hibernians who travelled from Belfast.

Today the well-known site continues to be a place of prayer and contemplation for many.

During Covid the shrine was a sanctuary, with large crowds regularly attending outdoor Mass in the grotto.

For many the experience evoked the spirit of those, who centuries before, overcame their own adversity to attend the nearby Cam Mass Rock.



Last year, relics of St Bernadette, who witnessed the Blessed Mother in Lourdes in 1858, were brought to the Moneyglass grotto.

The spectacular monument includes a portion of rock from the site where the Virgin Mary is said to have stood during the apparition to St Bernadette.

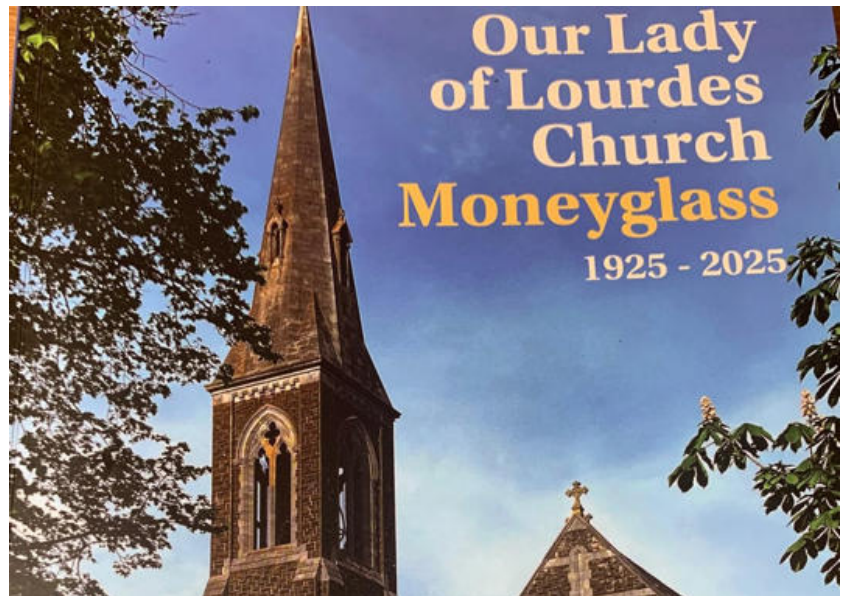
Bishop McKeown

Just last weekend a new statue of Our Lady, which was purchased in Lourdes, was carried in procession from the grounds of St Ergnat's GAC, Moneyglass, to the church site.

The shrine was the brainchild of Canon John O'Nolan who, along with Mr McMeel and others, went on pilgrimage to Lourdes in 1924.

AUGUST 18, 2025

When the church opened a year later the Irish News described it as “a glorious monument of Irish Catholic fidelity and devotion to the Blessed Virgin” adding that it was “Ulster’s great sacred shrine”.



The nearby grotto was completed after the death of Canon O’Nolan in 1930.

The Moneyglass shrine sits in the parish of Duneane, which also includes the village of Toome and Cargin - well known for its achievements on the Gaelic football field.

Traditional rivalries will be set aside, as they were 100 years ago, on Friday evening when the parish comes together in faith to mark the centenary milestone.

Writing in a specially published book to mark the occasion, Bishop McKeown recalls his mother Rose telling how Canon O’Nolan, who was terminally ill, asked her father to build a “niche” for a statue of Our Lady in the grotto, which was then under construction.

“When I see or visit the church, I give thanks for the many artists and craftsmen who laboured in all weather to create something beautiful to the honour and glory of God,” he writes.

“And when I visit the grotto I think of the stone cutter who worked with the hard rock to make a niche for the statue, which would draw people for almost a century.”

Parish priest, Fr James O'Reilly, said he was “humbled to celebrate the centenary”.

“The church and grotto I believe are two of the best kept secrets in the Diocese of Down and Connor,” he wrote.

His predecessor, Canon Paddy McWilliams, described the centenary as a “momentous milestone”.

“This place, crafted by our ancestors a place that has been my privilege to work and live in for almost 30 years, my little bit of ‘heaven on earth’ will continue to serve as a place for prayer, a place for celebrations, a place for solace and reflection,” he wrote.

Úna Johnston, who has helped organise the centenary event, said it is “absolutely vital” to mark the occasion.

She recalled how local people, including members of her own family, donated jewellery to be melted down to raise the money needed to build the church and grotto.

“This was a parish effort,” she said.

A centenary celebration Mass will be held in the church on Friday, the Feast of the Assumption, at 6pm.

The Our Lady of Lourdes commemorative book will be on sale on the day.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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