

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Botanic Gardens Belfast

Image of the day



Botanic Gardens Belfast

One of the top free attractions in the city. Close to the Ulster Museum and Queen's University.

News



North Western Methodist farewell to missionary from Poland

“Today I said farewell to Leslaw Kawalec, UMC missionary from Poland working with us in Letterkenny.

“When he arrived last summer we were dreaming of a new church - as we say farewell we have a French language congregation and an independent Polish house church. We are growing Methodism and God's Kingdom. Thank you Leslaw”.

Religious studies remains popular despite shortage of specialist teachers and lack of Uni's offering it

Religious studies is still one of the most popular subjects among school pupils, according to the latest figures from the Religious Education Council (REC) and the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE).



RS is now the seventh most popular subject at Key Stage 4, placing it firmly in the top ten out of 31 available subjects.

However, uptake in England has dipped slightly this year, down by 2.1 per cent.

Despite its popularity, the REC is concerned about a shortage of specialist teachers. More than half (51 per cent) of religious studies teachers are qualified in another subject.



  

Ramoan and Culfeightrin

The Lammas Fair Ballycastle, 2025

Why not join us for refreshments on
Monday 25th August
10am-4pm
in



Ramoan Parish Centre

(across from the Co-Op) 

We have on offer tea, coffee,
homemade soup, sandwiches,
scones, tray bakes and a
comfortable seat!

In the 2024–25 academic year, only one in five new RS teachers had a degree in theology or religious studies.

The problem has been made worse by the withdrawal of the Subject Knowledge Enhancement grant, which previously helped graduates from other disciplines gain the subject knowledge needed to teach RE. The grant used to account for over a quarter of all trainee teachers in RS.

In a statement, REC chair Sarah Lane Cawte said: “We have a worrying situation in our schools where one of the most widely taken GCSEs is taught by an ever-declining number of specialists. Too many in this enormous cohort continue to receive poor quality, tokenistic RE as an afterthought, something that threatens to undermine societal cohesion and leaves students poorly prepared for life in modern Britain.”

University options for theology and religious studies are also shrinking. Only 21 higher education institutions in England and Wales now offer degrees in the subject, compared to 90 for history, 90 for music, and 101 for sociology.

This trend is affecting the number of students enrolling to study the subject at university. According to The British Academy, in 2019 there were around 6,500 fewer students taking these subjects in 2017/18 compared to 2011/12 - almost a 50 per cent drop in six years.

For those interested in ministry rather than academic study, there are around 30 Christian Bible colleges and 23 Church of England theological institutions in the UK. However, many are closing due to financial pressures and falling enrolment,

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including St John's College, Nottingham, which closed in 2019, and Redcliffe College, which closed in 2020.

The Church of England has also seen a 40 per cent fall in the number of people training for ordained ministry since 2019.

Education



GCSE Results Morning at Coleraine Grammar

A lot of happy faces as everyone opened their envelopes.



BRA's new team for the new academic year

It has been a busy and exciting first morning back for our M6 pupils as they returned for the start of the new academic year at Belfast Royal Academy.

Alongside preparing UCAS applications and looking ahead to their A2 studies, pupils took part in voting for this year's Head Boy, Head Girl, and Deputies.

We are delighted to announce our new leadership team:
Head Girl: Aliyah Akmad (Ligoniel Primary School)
Head Boy: Alex French (Templepatrick Primary School)

Deputy Head Girls: Maya Campbell (Carnmoney Primary School), Ruby Latham (Greenisland Primary School)

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Deputy Head Boys: Ewan Bickerstaff (Springfield Primary School), Finn McAlorum (Our Lady of Lourdes Park Lodge Primary School)

We wish all of our Senior Prefects every success in their leadership journey this year, as they set an example of commitment, teamwork, and responsibility for the whole school community.

Belfast International Arts Festival 2025





Ulster University was delighted to host the launch of the 63rd Belfast International Arts Festival 2025 Autumn Programme at our Belfast campus this week.

Running from 14 October – 9 November, this year's festival presents a vibrant programme of contemporary arts and culture, featuring outstanding theatre, dance, music, visual arts, literature and film from both local and international artists.

Read more: <https://ow.ly/TP9a50WFlq7>



We Are Donegal ETB

We welcomed thirty new teachers for induction this morning ahead of the new academic term in our schools and Further Education and Training (FET) centres.

They are pictured here with our Director of Schools Dr Martin Gormley, our schools Ethos Coordinator Eamonn Ryan and our HR Department staff. We wish them well as they embark on their teaching career with us.

Cathedral Calls

Meet the Limerick reredos

The ornate structure behind the altar in many historic churches is called a reredos (pronounced rear-dos).



Often richly carved and decorated, it draws the eye and the spirit toward the sacred heart of the church: the altar.

The reredos in Saint Mary's Cathedral was erected in 1907 and is purportedly the work of William "Willie" Pearse (1881–1916).

Next time you visit the cathedral take a closer look behind the altar and admire the artistry and devotion.

Cider and cheese to offer 'warm welcome' at Wells Cathedral this autumn

Cider and cheese-makers from across Somerset will be setting up their stalls in Wells Cathedral, next month, for its first Cider & Cheese Festival — part of an ambition to become England's "most joyful cathedral".

Event organisers at the cathedral are inviting connoisseurs to sample a vast range of Somerset's best produce, and to meet local makers and experts, while enjoying a programme of live music and family activities, on Saturday 27 September.

The Dean of Wells, the Very Revd Toby Wright, said that the new festival was part of a wider drive to welcome more people into the building: "We are pursuing the bold ambition to become this country's most joyful cathedral. And as part of that vision, we want to ensure that Wells Cathedral is a place where the whole of our local community feels warmly welcomed. . .

"Bringing together Somerset's rich tradition of world-class cider- and cheese-makers in this beautiful cathedral will, I am sure, be a truly joyful occasion for everyone!"

The event is supported by sponsors including Mogers Drewett, Thatchers, Charlie Bigham's, Bray's Cider, and St Andrew's Press.

Bray's Cider is made from the apples of regenerative orchards within five miles of Adam and Jess Bray's farm in Wrantage, near Taunton

Bray's Cider is made from the apples of regenerative orchards within five miles of Adam and Jess Bray's farm in Wrantage, near Taunton. Other cider-makers confirmed for the event include Wilkins Dry Farmhouse Cider, made at Roger Wilkins' farm in Mudgley, Burrow Hill, Dowding's, Glastonbury Abbey, Harry's, Honey's, Porlock, Rich's, Sandford Orchards, Sheppy's, Thatchers, Tricky and Jacks.

Alternative drinks will include cocktails and gin from Still Sisters, Wells Cathedral's own "Dean Turner's" gins, wines from Canned Wine Co. and non-alcoholic options from Wise Bartender.

Cheeses on offer in the cathedral's nave will include Wookey Hole Cheddar, which is matured naturally in the Somerset caves, and products from the Bath Soft Cheese Company, run by the Padfield family at Park Farm in Kelston, which includes traditional Bath Soft Cheese, Bath Blue and Kelston Park, as well as the intriguingly named Wyfe of Bath and Merry Wyfe.

Alongside the food and drink tasting, there is a programme of entertainment from Somerset-based performers, including tribute band The Mangledwurzels, community pop choir PRP Contemporary Voices, and seven-piece covers band Jukebox Banned.

Wells Cathedral Cider & Cheese Festival takes place on Saturday 27 September, from 12 noon until 9 p.m. Tickets cost £17.50 for adults and £12.50 for under 18s, including access to all activities on the day, two half-pint drink tokens, an event programme with tasting notes, and a commemorative glass. Additional drink tokens will be available at the event, priced £2.50 each.

For tickets and information see wellscathedral.org.uk/cider-and-cheese

Clergy and ministry



A warm Dundalk welcome

“We gave a very warm welcome to Revd Shirley Murphy, her husband and son, to the Parochial Group of Dundalk, Heynestown Union, Ballymascanlon



Union and Creggan.

“We wish them every blessing and send our best wishes to them following Shirley's Institution as Rector by Archbishop John McDowell”.

Events

Experience the sights, smells and tastes of Harvest at the Ulster Folk Museum

Experience the sights, smells and tastes of Harvest and see these skills in action as we mark the end of the growing season.

It's all happening at the Ulster Folk Museum on Saturday 20th September.

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Free for members! Book Harvest tickets

<https://bit.ly/3HDoJsN>



The poster features a purple-to-pink gradient background. At the top, the title 'THE RAHAN TO CLONMACNOISE ECUMENICAL PILGRIMAGE' is written in yellow. Below it, the date 'Date: Saturday 6th Sept 2025' and time 'Time: 9 am' are listed in yellow. The location 'Place: St. Carthage Church, Rahan' is also in yellow. Booking information 'Booking Information: Eventbrite' is provided in yellow. The COI Tullamore Union of Parishes logo is at the bottom. On the left, there are logos for the Clara Heritage Society, the Clonmacnoise Pilgrimage Project, and the Clonmacnoise Pilgrimage Project. On the right, there are three circular images: a stone cross, a church, and a person walking on a path. The text 'Designed by Freepik' is at the bottom right.

**THE RAHAN TO CLONMACNOISE
ECUMENICAL PILGRIMAGE**

Date: Saturday 6th Sept 2025

Time: 9 am

Place: St. Carthage Church, Rahan

Booking Information: Eventbrite

COI Tullamore Union of Parishes

Clara Heritage Society

Clonmacnoise Pilgrimage Project

Clonmacnoise Pilgrimage Project

Designed by Freepik

Rahan to Clonmacnoise Ecumenical Pilgrimage 2025

Please be Advised: Lunch and bus tickets for the Rahan to Clonmacnoise Ecumenical Pilgrimage close on Monday, 1st September 2025; however, registration remains open until Friday, 5th September 2025.

If you have any queries, please contact Anna Orman at claraheritagesociety@email.com.

Please find the Eventbrite link for booking below:
<https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/rahan-to-clonmacnoise-ecumenical-pilgrimage-september-2025-tickets-1396945173619>

This event is funded by CreativeIrl, and supported by Offaly County Council.

Celebrating St. Coman's Church Roscommon

St Coman's Church of Ireland in Roscommon town has announced an exciting programme of events to coincide with National Heritage Week.

The theme of these events is 'Exploring Our foundations' which will celebrate the church's place in the community.

This year marks the 250th anniversary since St Coman founded his first monastery on the site of the present church building and is a major historical and religious site in the county, cherished by successive generations of Roscommon people.

A major cultural event will take place on Wednesday August 20th from 7pm to 8:30pm, entitled 'Aspects of the History of St Coman's Church'. This eagerly awaited event will incorporate a performance by the Roscommon One Town Voice Community Choir and a fascinating talk by local historian, Albert Siggins.

The illustrated talk will focus on the history of the church its graveyard and its people. Coinciding with the talk will be the launch of a booklet of the same name, written by Albert Siggins to mark this special anniversary year. This event has been made possible with funding from Roscommon County Council.

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Also on Sunday, August 24th from 2pm there will be a talk on the Cross of Cong which holds particular connections to Roscommon town. The Cross enjoys particular connections with Roscommon and these will be explored during this talk.

As part of a series of Open Afternoons, the church building will be open for visitors to learn of the significance of the site itself, the present church building and its graveyard through some visual displays and memorials in the church.



**CHANGING
ATTITUDE
IRELAND**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
SATURDAY 20 SEPTEMBER, 1.30PM
MEMBERS AND GUESTS WELCOME**

**SAVE
THE
DATE**

PARISH CENTRE, ST JOHN THE
BAPTIST CHURCH, CLONTARF,
DUBLIN, D03 NX77

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These open afternoons take place from Wednesday August 20th to Saturday August 23rd inclusive from 2pm to 4pm and on Sunday, August 24th from 3pm to 4pm.

All events are free of charge, with an opportunity to make a voluntary donation which will be divided between church funds and Roscommon Tidy Towns Association. Further details are available on www.heritageweek.ie and social media – FB: Roscommon Church of Ireland.

https://www.dkea.ie/celebrating-st-comans-church-roscommon/?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=facebook

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

The publication of Church News Ireland is overseen by Very Rev Dr Houston McKelvey OBE, QVRM, TD. He may be contacted at houstonmckelvey@mac.com

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Church News Ireland

www.churchnewsireland.org

**Link in Monday through Saturday from
early morning**

Please recommend to your friends