

Church News Ireland



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Image of the day

Light Beyond the Water

A response by Susan Boyle and Andrea Bocelli

"On July 11, as the world reeled from the devastating Texas floods, Susan Boyle received a quiet phone call from Andrea Bocelli. "We don't need a perfect song—we need presence," he said gently.

The very next morning, in a modest studio tucked away in Florence, without producers, without planning, the two recorded Light Beyond the Water. It wasn't meant for charts. It wasn't made for attention. It was born out of grief.

When Susan was shown the list—111 lives lost, nearly 30 of them children—she broke down in tears. Andrea reached for her hand and said softly, "Let's sing as if they can still hear us."

There was no press release. No camera crew. No ambition beyond honoring the silence. Just a candlelit church, a lone piano, a violin, and two voices etched by sorrow and reverence. As their final harmony faded into stillness, a message appeared on the screen:

"In Memory of the Texas Flood Victims – July 2025."
And for one solemn moment, music became a place to mourn... and to heal."

News



Inaugural Waterford and Lismore Frassati Camino

What a way to finish, walking (and splashing!) across the beach at Ardmore before visiting St Declan's Well, Tomb and the Round Tower on the Cliff walk.

The weather and views were stunning, but more than that, our group experienced real friendship, fun, deep moments



of prayer and reflection and
experience that will never be
forgotten!

Who knows, we might even
do it all again next year!



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Youth Mission team home from Hungary



The Exodus

Youth Mission team from Ballyclare & Ballynure parish
are home from Gardony, Hungary,

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The team would like to thank everyone for their prayerful support. The team had an incredible time and saw God's blessing on the kids' holiday camp and the youth bible studies. Please continue to pray for Pastor Melinda and the team in Gardony Reformed Church



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as they build on the work done last week.

Calary Garden Party Raises Funds for Nairobi Street Children



The people of Calary Parish in the Diocese of Glendalough continued their support of Sr Mary Killeen's work with street children in Nairobi in a new way this summer.

Over many years the parish has raised funds for the Mukuru Promotion Centre in Nairobi, Kenya, of which Sr Mary is the director. This July they held a magnificent garden party in the grounds of Calary Church to celebrate St Mary's 40 years of working with the children in the Mukuri slums. The event was a huge success and has so far has raised €5588.80 for the Mukuru Promotion Centre.

The event was attended by Sr Mary who spoke of the poverty and dangers endured by the children on a daily basis. The MPC takes in and looks after as many children

as possible. Most learn a trade and go on to become breadwinners for their families.

Calary usually holds a concert and supper for MPC so the garden party was a new venture and one which Calary's Derek Neilson describes as daunting given the vagaries of the Irish weather.

“However, the event was a huge success and we would like to thank both those who came and joined us on the day and also other friends who were unable to make it but have sent donations,” he said. “All donations go directly to provide the basic needs of the children – food, hot water, school books and other essentials.”

He paid tribute to all who provided the afternoon tea and to the Stedfast Brass Band whose talented musicians entertained those present.

You can learn more about the work of MPC here:
<https://www.mercymukuru.co.ke/>

Down & Dromore Middle Camp gets underway

The third and final Kilbroney Adventure Camp is underway with Middle Camp (for those going in to Years 10, 11 and 12).

The organisers are grateful for the safe and successful conclusion of the Senior and Junior Camps.

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Please keep Josh Thornbury and all the leaders in your prayers this week as the group learn more about God and enjoy some fun and adventure together. Our Kilbroney



Adventure Camps can be life-changing for young people in the diocese and some campers go on to become leaders themselves. More to come but in the meantime, some photos from the story so far at - <https://www.downanddromore.org/news/2025/08/middle-camp-gets-underway>



The Mary Sumner Prayer

All this day, O Lord,
let me touch as many lives as possible for thee;
and every life I touch,
do thou by thy spirit quicken,
whether through the word I speak,
the prayer I breathe,
or the life I live. Amen.



Methody rowers representing Ireland at World Championship

Wishing all the best to Harry, Sophia and Daniel as they embark on their journey at the Rowing U19 World Championship representing Ireland and Methodist College Belfast this week, in Trakai, Lithuania!

Harry will compete in the JM4X, Daniel will race in the JM4- and Sophia will race in the JW2X while Mr Taylor will be part of the coaching team.

Campbell successes at Greystones Golf Club

Congratulations to Jake (Year 11, Davis's) and Marlo (Year 11, Yates's) who represented the College in the recent Flogas Irish Junior Open Schools Cup at Greystones Golf Club.



Over 100 young golfers from schools across Ireland took part in this prestigious event, and our boys delivered an outstanding performance.

Jake and Marlo won the U19 Team Champions, with Jake winning the Nett Individual Title and Marlo finishing as Runner-Up.

A fantastic achievement - well done, boys!

From Belfast High School to Nottingham Forest

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**Year 12 pupil
Kalum
Thompson has
signed a 2-year
Scholarship with
Nottingham
Forest FC.**

Kalum and his parents were invited to the Nigel Doughty Academy in July to celebrate his new deal. Kalum, an attacking midfielder, joins premier league club Nottingham



Forest from Linfield where he made his first team debut in September 2024 in their 3-2 win against Ballyclare Comrades. Congratulations Kalum - we wish you every success for the future!

Open Day for Union College degree applications

Whatever your results bring on Thursday, there's still time to explore something extraordinary.

Our BA Christian Theology programme takes you deep into biblical studies, church history, and Christian doctrine - while

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developing the critical thinking and communication skills valued by employers across many sectors.

Join us for an Open Day on 14th August (10am-1pm) or online session (2-3pm). Applications still open for September 2025!

From studying the Gospels in their original Greek to exploring early church history and Christian doctrine, our BA degree offers serious academic engagement with the Christian faith. You'll develop expertise in biblical interpretation, theological thinking, and historical analysis - skills that translate across many career paths.

Get answers to your questions - Open Day 14th August (drop in 10am-1pm) or online 2-3pm. Applications open for September start!

<https://www.union.ac.uk/>

Events

Northern Ireland Organ competition

We are delighted to introduce our next Senior Competitor. Meet Jakob Gierok (17), a student at Bunsen-Gymnasium Heidelberg, Germany. He'll be performing:

Alfred Hollins: Overture No. 2 in C minor

JS Bach: Trio Sonata No. 2 in C minor, BWV 526: ii. Largo

Dupré: Prelude and Fugue in G minor, Op. 7, No. 3

The Senior Competitions will run next Monday, 11 August, in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh, 1330-1600 & 1900-2130.

Do join us and lend all of our young organists your support.

Celebrating 150 Years of GFS Worldwide (1875–2025)

As part of the 150th anniversary celebrations of the Girls' Friendly Society, a Special Service was held to mark this significant milestone. The service was led by the GFS Central Chaplain, Rev. Tanya Woods, under the powerful theme *"Faith Instead of Fear."*

Over 30 GFS Members - both Leaders and girls from across Ireland, gathered in fellowship and celebration, joined by our GFS Ireland Central President, Mrs. Myra Moody.



We are delighted to share that the service will be broadcast on **RTÉ One** on **Sunday, 10th August at 11:00 AM**. We invite you to tune in and be part of this special occasion as we give thanks for 150 years of GFS's mission and ministry around the world.



Pictured is our Diocesan President Mrs. Mervyl McGettigan with members of Inver Union GFS.

Community Day at the Charles Wood Festival – Saturday 16 August



One of the real favourites of the Festival, our Community Day is a joyful celebration of singing, friendship, and



togetherness – the perfect showcase of just how vibrant Northern Ireland’s choirs can be.

Community Choir Showcase & Competition

Five fantastic community choirs – Ballyclare Male Voice Choir, The Big Belfast Choir, Cookstown Youth Choir, Dungannon Choral Society, and Portadown Male Voice Choir – will fill the city with music in a lively two-hour showcase at the Band Stand on Market Street. Enjoy the variety, colour, and energy as they share their passion for singing. Afterwards, the choirs will be treated to a BBQ before joining us for the evening’s grand finale.

The Band Stand, Market Street | 16:00 - 18:00 | Free admission

The Community Prom

As the sun sets on The Mall, the Charles Wood Singers and our five community choirs unite for a spectacular open-air concert. Pack a picnic, bring your friends (and your pets!), and relax in the beautiful surroundings of Armagh’s historic

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Mall. The evening will feature performances, the presentation of the afternoon's awards, and a rousing 'Big Sing' where all the choirs join together for an unforgettable finale.

The Mall, Armagh | 18:30 | Free admission

Here are some photos from last year's amazing event – hundreds of singers on The Mall, glorious sunshine, and a buzzing atmosphere from start to finish.

St Anns Dublin lunchtime *recital*

Thursday, August 14th, 2025 | 1:20 PM Sorchá Aisling O'Regan (Voice) & Orlaith Sharkey (Piano) Orlaith Sharkey, a talented pianist from Donegal, will join Sorchá Aisling O'Regan for a beautiful recital of voice and piano music.

Methodist Property Processes Awareness Sessions

All those who are responsible for Methodist property are encouraged to attend our upcoming Property Processes Awareness Sessions - this includes Ministers, Lay Workers, Property Stewards and Church Council members.

Two online sessions will be held on Thursday 4 September for you to avail of:

Registration is now open:

- Afternoon Session: 2pm – 3:30pm – bit.ly/PP-Afternoon
- Evening Session: 7:30pm – 9pm – bit.ly/PP-Evening

Perspective



A Flower Child of Arnhem

Pictured above is Willemien Rieken. She was only 9 years old when she first began laying flowers on the grave of William Edmond, a British soldier who fought and died to liberate her Dutch Village.

From the day he died, and for 75 years, she looked after his grave and kept his memory alive.

During WWII, William served with the 1st Airborne Reconnaissance Squadron and took part in the Battle of

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Arnhem in the Netherlands. Sadly, on September 17, 1944, he was shot in the back by a German sniper and fell to the ground.

One of his comrades, St David Christie, rushed to his aid, but nothing could be done to save William. Seconds before dying, he said to David: "Tell my wife I love her." This British soldier was then buried at the Arnhem Oosterbeek War Cemetery.

Willemien Rieken passed away in 2020. She was one of the last surviving Flower Children, young people who laid flowers at hundreds of graves of Allied casualties in a ceremony after the end of the war.

Niall Cherry, secretary of the Arnhem 1944 Fellowship, said: "She was one of the last surviving Dutch civilian links to the Battle of Arnhem. Willemien was a lovely lady who tended to the grave of Trooper Edmund for many years. She will be sadly missed."

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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www.churchnewsireland.org

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

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