

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Mothers' Union at Lambeth

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Mothers' Union at Lambeth

The Mothers' Union and its World President, Sheran Harper (left) had a very positive presence at the recent Lambeth Conference.

People and places

'Mere Evangelism' Conference in Bangor

The Evangelism Conference 2022 is coming to Northern Ireland on Saturday 1st October with early bird tickets now on sale.

Hamilton Road Presbyterian Church in Bangor, Co Down will be the venue for this day long event, which will focus on the writings of C S Lewis and has been themed: 'Mere Evangelism.'

Lewis' writings and broadcasts continue to have a widespread impact long after his death. What was it about his thoughts, approach, methods and manner that have drawn so many people to the gospel so powerfully over the years?

Three internationally respected guest speakers will delve into some of the key areas written and spoken about by the Belfast-born author during his lifetime.

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Randy Newman is senior fellow for apologetics and evangelism with The C. S. Lewis Institute and occasionally blogs about evangelism and other topics at connectionpoints.us. He is the author of *Mere Evangelism: 10 Insights from C.S. Lewis to Help You Share Your Faith*.



Glen Scrivener is an ordained Church of England minister and evangelist who preaches Christ through writing, speaking, and online media. He directs the evangelistic ministry *Speak Life*. Originally from Australia, Glen now lives with his wife, Emma, and two children in England, and they belong to All Souls Eastbourne. He is the author of several books, including *The Air We Breathe: How We All Came to Believe in Freedom, Kindness, Progress, and Equality* (The Good Book Company, 2022) and *3-2-1: The Story of God, the World, and You* (10Publishing, 2014).

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Rico Tice is associate minister of All Souls Langham Place, London, and founder of Christianity Explored Ministries. He is the author of *Honest Evangelism: How to Talk About Jesus Even When It's Tough*, and *Faithful Leaders: and the Things that Matter Most*.

Ticket details for The Evangelism Conference 2022 – ‘Mere Evangelism’

Tickets booked for the conference by 24th September will cost just £20 per person with lunch and refreshments included. (The cost after that date will be £25, group reductions for parties of five or more people are available.) The day will begin at 10am and end at 4pm.

For further information and to book your tickets, log on to www.evangelism-conference.org.uk

Exhibition marks Bishop Daly as ‘A Man for All Seasons’

The curator of a new exhibition on the life and legacy of former bishop of Derry Edward Daly said he left a great mark on his adopted city.

“A man for All Seasons” is open to the public at St Eugene’s Cathedral Hall in Derry until August 14.

Grainne McCafferty said it was only right that the lives of people like Bishop Daly, who died at the age of 82 in 2016, should be marked.

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“More than anything, he gave hope in difficult times and lit a candle in the darkness,” Mrs McCafferty said. The retired school principal said she had always felt inspired by Bishop Daly, even before he came prominent through Bloody Sunday.



Heritage Week Children's Tours at St Canice's Cathedral

Visit the Cathedral that gave Kilkenny its name, Cill Chainnigh, the Church of St Canice. See the Round Tower, the oldest freestanding building in Kilkenny and learn about the Early Monastic Buildings. Be inspired by the beauty of this 800 year old Gothic Cathedral.

On this tour pupils will discover:

- The diet of St Canice's Medieval monks thanks to a smelly discovery
- The ingredients Alice Kyteler (the first women put on trial for witchcraft) used in her potions.
- Medieval diseases and their unusual cures.
- Relive Oliver Cromwell's attack on the Cathedral with demolition and rebuilding games.
- Explore the 300 burial monuments in the Cathedral and take home a brass rubbing of one of these.
- Learn about the Cathedral's stunning architectural features and make a lino print of one of the Cathedral's Medieval tiles.
- Discover Kilkenny's most powerful family the Butlers and see their magnificent effigy tombs.

Book

Tours Available 18th & 19th August 10 am-11.30am

Duration: 1 hour 30 minutes

Suitable for Children Aged 8 to 12.

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She recalled first meeting the late church leader through the 71 Players theatre group which he set up while serving as a curate at St Eugene's Cathedral.

“I was always inspired by his courage and fearlessness and, I have to say as well, by the theatrical side to him.”

Bishop Daly, who was born in Co Donegal but raised in Fermanagh, moved to Derry in 1962 after spending five years as a curate in Castlederg, Co Tyrone.

He left briefly in the 1970s to serve as a religious advisor to RTÉ in Dublin but spent the majority of his career in Derry and was appointed bishop of Derry in 1974.

He became one of Ireland's best known church leaders through the many initiatives he instigated and through his work for justice and reconciliation during the Troubles.

A critic of violence from whichever quarter, Bishop Daly was heavily involved with the late primate of All Ireland, Cardinal Tomás Ó Fiaich, in efforts to find a solution to the 1980 and 1981 hunger strikes.

The Derry cleric also highlighted miscarriages of justice, often attending appeal hearings for the victims.

Following his retirement on health grounds in 1993, in his memoirs he called on the leadership of the Catholic church to scrap the compulsory celibacy rule for clergy.

He believed the change would help deal with the fall in vocations to the priesthood.

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At the official opening of the exhibition, Mrs McCafferty told guests Bishop Daly was truly a “Man for All Seasons”.

“This exhibition sets out to celebrate and mark the many facets of his life and the multiplicity of ways he left his mark and influence, centring on Derry but reaching out in ever widening ripples to include Ireland as a whole, Britain and the USA,” she said.

Report courtesy of Derry Daily



Sun's out, table's out at the Book Well

When people donate books to the Book Well, Belfast, that sometimes includes Bibles. Instead of selling

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these, every so often (usually when the weather is good) the shop pops out a table and gives them away to anyone passing by.

No questions asked, no money taken (unless you'd like to leave a donation to Bible Society in Northern Ireland) and no small print (apart from the really tiny bibles.) Just gentle evangelism, and who knows whose lives will be changed because of this.

Ballybay Bighearts raise €12,000 for Christian Aid Ireland to help the world's poorest

The Presbyterian community of Ballybay raised almost €12,000 for international aid agency Christian Aid Ireland with their recent coffee morning and sale. Their fundraising efforts over more than half a century has made them one of the charity's most generous congregations on the island of Ireland.

The event, which was held in Second Ballybay Presbyterian Church Hall on 14 May, 2022 was the collective effort of four Presbyterian churches, locally, to support the charity's Christian Aid Week appeal which this year focuses on Zimbabwe. There, in the drought-affected east of the country where drought has brought crop failure and hunger, the agency has enabled almost 30,000 people to earn a living despite declining rainfall, including by helping female farmers make the switch to growing drought-resistant plants such as hibiscus which can be sold to make herbal tea.



The High Cross in Dromore , County Down, stands near the cathedral. It stood in the market square until it was broken into pieces in the 17th century. It was repaired and removed in 1887 - Photo and note by Tim Ferres

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The tea served at the Ballybay fundraiser was of the 'normal' variety and there were home-made sweet treats on offer for the more than 150 people who attended. There were also cakes and jam to take home for later, as well as stalls selling plants and second-hand books. The proceeds of the coffee morning and sale were boosted by a number of large donations made by – and elicited by – members of the congregation.

It was a welcome return for the event which has been held every May for more than half a century, interrupted only by the Covid pandemic. But even during the two lockdown years, the fundraising continued as one local woman – Nan Bradford from Rockcorry – completed solo sponsored walks which brought in more than €7,000 to support relief efforts, with a handful of large donations pushing the total even higher.

Nan, who works at a local mushroom farm, enjoyed her lockdown walking but was pleased to swap her hiking boots for her baking bowl this year – just one of around 20 home bakers whose efforts helped to draw in the crowds. She added: "I was delighted to see the coffee morning and sale return after Covid. It's become a fixture in the town's calendar and is supported by the whole community. I think it's important to raise money for Christian Aid because of all the good it does. We're very lucky in this country. We're really blessed."

The Presbyterian churches behind the event are 1st and 2nd Ballybay, Rockcorry and Drumkeen which have a combined membership of around 160 families. The

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fundraiser was organised by a team of people drawn from the four churches.

Report courtesy of The Churches Page

World News

Welby: Churches must stand up against oppression and avoid ‘supporting governments’

Churches must avoid being “sucked in to supporting governments” and stand up against oppression, the Archbishop of Canterbury said at the closing service of the Lambeth Conference.

Justin Welby told the Lambeth Conference of worldwide Anglican bishops they must speak, act and “take risks” particularly as many communities are unable to do any of these things.

Suggesting this could seem to put them in conflict with governments, the Archbishop said: “Our approach springs from scripture. This is not the Church getting involved in politics, it’s the Church getting involved in God.”

Applause broke out as he said: “To be silent on the unethical treatment of migrants, or on war, oppression, the abuse of human rights on persecution, is to be one of the oppressors. “We live in solidarity because the person with the gun pointing at them, and I have been there, often can not say anything.”



The Archbishop has previously criticised Downing Street's plan to send illegal migrants to Rwanda, which he said went against Christian values. He added that "those in other countries can speak with power, they can gather support, they can take risks". He described the climate crisis as "an undeclared war with huge consequences".

He said: "In history, in empire, in politics, all too often all churches, not only Anglicans, have got sucked in to supporting governments, colluding with injustice and upholding oppression at any and every level. To stand against oppression is frightening because it is costly ... We don't like it when governments speak forcefully against us or do worse than that in many parts of the Anglican communion, yet we must speak and act."

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He told the meeting that Church members have “disagreed without hatred” in recent days but “not as many in the press want us to”. It came after he reaffirmed a 1998 Anglican declaration rejecting same-sex marriage, ignited a controversy over the Church’s relationships with the LGBTQ+ community.

The resolution states that marriage is “between a man and a woman”, and that same-sex relationships are “incompatible with scripture”.

On Tuesday, the Archbishop said he could not and would not punish churches for conducting gay marriages.

He said: “I neither have, nor do I seek, the authority to discipline or exclude an Anglican Communion church.”

Death of 12-year-old Archie highlights need to find better way to deal with life issues

The Catholic Church in England and Wales says there needs to be a better way to deal with life issues following the death of 12-year-old Archie Battersbee.

He passed away on Saturday after his life support was removed.

His Christian family had exhausted legal options fighting for his right to be kept alive.

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Speaking following his death, they said no one should have to watch their child die by having life support withdrawn - calling it "barbaric".

Calling for lessons to be learnt from this case, Rt Rev John Sherrington lead bishop for life issues for the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales said: "Every step must recognise his inherent dignity as a person created in the image and likeness of God. The process of compassionate accompaniment of Archie and his parents at this time of saying goodbye is so important.

"The recently hard-fought arguments in the courts about Archie's ongoing treatment and care highlight again the need to find better ways of mediation by which parents and health care professionals can reach common agreements and avoid complex legal proceedings.

"Whilst the Catholic Church recognises that there are situations when medical treatment to sustain life is no longer obligatory if there is no hope of recovery, ordinary treatment and care should be provided appropriate to the condition of the patient."

The Anscombe Bioethics Centre is also calling for reform on the issue.

In a statement in response to Archie's death, the Catholic organisation said: "The Centre therefore calls on the Secretary of State for Health to act urgently to bring into force section 177 of the Health and Care Act 2022 [3] which states that:

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"(1) The Secretary of State must arrange for the carrying out of a review into the causes of disputes between (on the one hand) persons with parental responsibility for a critically ill child and (on the other) persons responsible for the provision of care or medical treatment for the child as part of the health service in England.

"(2) The Secretary of State must publish and lay before Parliament a report on the outcome of the review, within one year beginning with the date on which this section comes into force.

"The tragic case of Archie Battersbee must lead to reform so that such conflicts can be averted in the future."

Churches call on UK government to do more to help people through cost of living crisis

Churches and Christian groups representing millions of believers in the UK have come together to back a report which calls on the government to do more to help people through the cost of living crisis.

The document, which was commissioned by former Prime Minister Gordon Brown, says there are three major concerns as we head into the back end of the year: cuts to universal credit, benefits not matching inflation and further increases to energy prices.

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Written by poverty expert and Loughborough University Professor Donald Hirsch, the report claims some families will be £1,600 out of pocket, despite government support.

"This crisis goes far beyond politics," Mr Brown said. "This is a moral issue - our responsibilities to our neighbours and in particular to those who have the least and whose needs are the greatest.

"The incoming Prime Minister has a moral responsibility to ensure that everyone has enough to live on, through this crisis and beyond.

"We cannot be at ease when millions are ill at ease and cannot rest content as long as there is so much discontent. Our society will be stronger when we help the weak and will be richer when we help the poor."

Brown is calling for an emergency budget to get ahead of the problem.

Outlining the scale of the issue, Professor Hirsch said: "The shortfall families are facing between skyrocketing costs and the support government have offered continues to grow.

"Families were falling behind with the anticipated rise in costs even when the measures were announced, and since then the food and energy costs forecast for this winter have continued to rise sharply."

The report has been endorsed by several church groups including the Evangelical Alliance, the Baptist Union and the Methodist Church.

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Rev Graham Thompson, president of the Methodist Church in Britain, said: "Churches and other faith groups are on the front line of offering support to families who are already being swept under by rising costs.

"We know that millions of families aren't simply making hard choices between heating and eating, but are having to go without both completely. If people aren't give enough support to live, we don't dare to imagine what will happen this winter.

"The government now have a duty to step up and take firm and long-lasting action to ensure not only that this crisis doesn't deepen, but that it doesn't happen again."

The government says support is being given though grants on energy costs. Leadership candidates Rishi Sunak and Liz Truss have this week been outlining their plans to tackle the crisis.

In the media

Humanists should stop lecturing the Church - Tim Stanley

True diversity is respecting the right of religious communities to believe unfashionable things - Tim Stanley writes in the Daily Telegraph

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And so it came to pass, in the holy season of Pride, that the Anglican communion did gather at Lambeth and upset Sandi Toksvig.

It's an old story. The Church opened its Lambeth conference, which ends today, intending to discuss the Good News; it wound up arguing about gay sex – giving the impression, yet again, that it is self-absorbed and divided. Justin Welby, who after nine years in the job now looks older than Methuselah, declared a compromise: doctrinally, homosexual acts remain a sin, but churches who move away from this teaching will not face sanction.

“I know we've never met,” wrote Ms Toksvig to the Archbishop in a public letter (does no one write privately anymore?) but were they friends, she would tell him he had betrayed “LGBTQ+ people” (I'd love to meet one of these + people, by the way, and ask if they'd ever consider going out with a -. You know: opposites attract).

Condemning his “statement of exclusion”, she tore into “fallible”, outdated and bigoted interpretations of the Bible that misrepresent the true teachings of Jesus Christ, namely that all that matters is to be a “good person”. And then cometh the kicker: “I am a humanist.”

I have received many such communications down the years explaining why I'm wrong about one aspect of theology or another, and in my experience they inevitably include a throwaway admission that the author does not themselves believe in God – which leads me to ask why they care that I do, or why it matters to them that a church keeps pace with the views of an atheist? This is like someone writing to

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Crufts to say, “Dear sir, when I attended your dog show I was disappointed to see that it included no cats, and given that I cannot stand dogs and much prefer cats, I suggest you make amends, or I shall not return!”

Now, Sandi has a point about preaching that perpetuates hate: she tells Welby that she has received death threats from religious homophobes, which is vile. But it’s fascinating how non-believers in an almost entirely secular culture still feel proprietary towards the church – and rather than give up on it, insist that it must become like the rest of society. Specifically, Western society.

I’m sure Welby would like to rewrite the rules on sex, but he feels a responsibility to hold together a global communion that includes moral traditionalists in poor countries. Here in Britain, if you had to imagine an Anglican, you might think of someone like Sandi: rich, white, liberal. But worldwide, the average Anglican is an African woman in her thirties living on less than \$4 a day. This communion is genuinely diverse, and given how often we hear that “diversity is a strength”, one would expect the fans of multiculturalism to acknowledge Welby’s attempt to hold it together.

But then I’ve also noticed that people who most loudly say they want diversity usually don’t, because if they did, they would respect the right of religious communities to believe unfashionable things. Instead they pressure them to change.

True diversity is a street in Birmingham (this actually exists), where a church called the Oratory of St Philip Neri sits opposite a strip club (and, no, that’s not why the church was

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built there). I don't insist the strip club displays a crucifix. I certainly don't want the brothers of the oratory to pole-dance for tips. For these are two separate worlds that flourish because their difference is respected, and you and I have the freedom to attend one or the other (and I'm sure some Brummies go to both).

Many liberals, however, see diversity not as an end in itself but a method, a means, of compelling churches to shed old ideas and embrace modernity, so that the rainbow flag can someday fly from every spire or minaret in Britain. A diverse world in which everyone thinks exactly the same.

Poem for today

Derry by Francis Ledwidge

By day a place of wheels and looms
That struggle in a narrow space
A shout of children in the slums
And girls with labour-stained face

By night a queen with victory crowned.
For all her years of loud turmoil
She spreads her beauty all around,
Reflects her glory in the Foyle.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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