



New resources on vocations are available at Church Hub - see report this issue.

Chief executive sought for controlled schools body in Northern Ireland

Two years after the Assembly agreed to set up a body to support controlled schools, recruitment has commenced for a chief executive.

Belfast Telegraph reports - One of the body's tasks is to address under-achievement among some working class Protestant children.

As part of the legislation that created the Education Authority (which replaced the former five education boards), the Assembly agreed in 2014 to form a body to support controlled schools.

It was argued that with falling standards at controlled schools, they needed a support body, similar to the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS) that supports maintained schools.

Now, almost 24 months later, recruitment has begun for a chief executive of a Controlled Schools Support Council (CSSC).

The post is described as a full-time position based in the greater Belfast area and comes with a salary ranging from £61,868 to £64,888.

It requires a minimum of three years leading an organisation related to the education sector.

The CSSC will not have the same type of responsibilities as the CCMS which was established as an upper tier of management for Catholic schools in 1989 in response to concerns about under-achievement. It has responsibilities including raising standards and the employment of teachers.



UUP education spokeswoman Sandra Overend. Mrs Overend is a member of the Church of Ireland in Derry Diocese

instead the CSSC will provide an advocacy role and work with schools to develop and maintain a collective ethos including, where appropriate, a role in identifying, encouraging and nominating governors and in ensuring ethos is part of employment considerations.

The boards of education of the Church of Ireland, Presbyterian Church in Ireland and Methodist Church in Ireland have all welcomed the establishment of the body, saying it will correct a deficit in the education system which has existed for decades.

DUP education spokesman Peter Weir has welcomed the "step forward" for the CSSC. "The advertisement of the chief executive of the Controlled Schools Support Council is another important step forward in ensuring equality in education in Northern Ireland," he said.

"This will be a key part of the jigsaw in ensuring the full establishment of the CSSC, and will mean for the first time in education that there will be a specific body representing all controlled schools, with a place directly on the Education Authority."

UUP education spokeswoman Sandra Overend qualified her welcome of the move with the question of why it has taken so long. "It seems to have taken an age to set up this Controlled Schools Support Council and the advertising for the job of chief executive is just a step along the way," she said.

"A working group to pave the way for CSSC was set up in 2012 and the Executive agreed to its establishment in 2014."

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/chief-executive-sought-for-controlled-schools-body-in-northern-ireland-34622053.html>

Priest recalls Belfast blitz as church prepares to honour war dead

A priest has recalled looking out of a bedroom window to see "a huge red glow where Belfast was" as his parish prepares to [mark the loss of 130 lives](#) during the infamous German 'blitz' on the city during World War II.

Irish News report - Fr Brendan McGee, (91), who is attached to St Patrick's Church at Donegall Street in the city centre, will be one of hundreds expected to attend two special church services this week to mark the [massive loss of life 75 years ago](#).

Then just 16 years old, Fr McGee was living with his family in Holywood, Co Down and travelling



***Fr Brendan McGee remembers the Blitz in Belfast -
photo by Hugh Russell***

up to school at St Malachy's College in Belfast every day.

"My father had a public house in Hibernian Street, the Ruby Bar and we lived over the pub," he recalls.

On the night the enemy planes came he recalled how he and his three sisters and my mother were together. My mother was saying the rosary and we were all under the kitchen table when we heard the bombers going up Belfast Lough.

"My sister Ida and myself went upstairs and looked out the window and all we saw was a huge red glow where Belfast was. There were over 200 planes."

Fr McGee said the north was completely "unprepared" for the attack, despite regular air raid warnings when single aeroplanes flew over in what were probably scouting missions.

"We hadn't enough guns or anything," he said.

"There was a little machine gun fired in the high street in Holywood and all it did was blow out all the windows.

"The next day I was going to St Malachy's College, Ida and myself went up and we got out of the bus, when we got into the centre of Belfast all we could see was buildings, they weren't burning, but steam was rising from the bricks.

"I saw two green fire brigades and a red fire brigade. The green fire brigades had come up from Dundalk, Drogheda and Dublin. DeValera sent them up to help with fighting the flames.

"I saw firemen sitting on the fenders exhausted, with a terrible look of exhaustion on their faces."

Fr McGee said even at that stage efforts were being made by the British government to manage information for fear of giving away too much to the German army.

"Altogether between the two raids there were 940 civilians killed. There were soldiers and police killed but we were never told that. We were never told what damage was done to the factories and especially Harland and Wolff. We were never told anything like that. It was all propaganda, that was all kept secret."

The priest can still look at the city scape and see where 'new' buildings have replaced those destroyed by the bombings.

Not all of the damage done was immediately apparent. Decades later, when he was parish priest at Greencastle on the outskirts of north Belfast, it was discovered that the church had suffered structural damage in the bombings of April 7/8 and 15 1941.

Between St Patrick's and neighbouring St Joseph's Church, Sailortown, 130 parishoners perished during the two raids.

* A service of remembrance for the victims of the Belfast Blitz will take place on Sunday April 17 at 3.30pm in St Anne's Cathedral while Requiem

Mass for the victims will take place in St Patrick's Church at 7pm this Friday.

Photographic coverage at :

http://www.irishnews.com/news/2016/04/13/news/priest-91-recalls-belfast-blitz-as-st-patrick-s-church-prepares-to-remember-its-dead-484264/?mc_cid=0330c0828d&mc_eid=23f2f80c40

Northern Catholic church council's official meetings with DUP and Sinn Féin

Yesterday Archbishop Eamon Martin, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All-Ireland, led delegations from the Northern Ireland Catholic Council on Social Affairs (NICCOSA) to two official meetings with political parties in Northern Ireland. The first meeting was in Belfast, with members of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), led by First Minister Arlene Foster MLA. The second meeting, with members of Sinn Féin, led by Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness MLA, took place in Armagh.

Speaking after the meetings, Archbishop Martin said that the Church delegation welcomed the opportunity to discuss a range of issues with



Archbishop of Armagh, Eamon Martin and Bishop of Dromore, John McAreevey

each party, including, “the shocking increase in levels of childhood poverty during the mandate of the last Assembly. We are asking all of the political parties in our meetings to make tackling childhood poverty and other forms of social need a top priority in the next Programme for Government”.

Archbishop Martin continued, “It was most encouraging that both parties recognised the vital contribution of Churches and faith groups in providing a range of services that support some

of the most vulnerable in our society. We highlighted the need to respect the right of faith-based groups to provide these services in accordance with their particular religious ethos and values. We also asked both parties to consider how Churches and wider civic society could engage in a more structured dialogue with the next Assembly, mindful that the model of a civic forum was an important component of the Belfast Agreement.”

Dr Nicola Brady, a member of NICCOSA, said, “As we did last week in our meeting with the SDLP, we emphasised to both parties the importance of consistent support for a culture of life, beginning with the commitment to the protection of the life of the unborn child, including those with life-limiting conditions. We encouraged the parties to work for the establishment of a perinatal hospice facility for Northern Ireland and to recognise the need to provide the best possible care for mothers and unborn children in cases of difficult or crisis pregnancy. We shared our conviction that the best possible future for humanity lies in building a culture of life and care in which the dignity of our beginning and end as persons is revered and respected, rather than

in a culture where the value of life is diminished and destroyed.”

Bishop Donal McKeown, chair of the Northern Ireland Commission for Catholic Education, said, “It is vital that the next Assembly works with all the stakeholders in education to raise standards and aspirations among young people and their families, from all backgrounds, and to enhance the opportunities to achieve their full potential.” The Church delegation highlighted the importance of a strong ethos in raising standards in schools and the right of parents to choose a faith-based education for their children. Bishop McKeown said, “We explained that this does not contradict the commitment of our schools, precisely because of their Catholic ethos, to work for a shared and reconciled society by promoting inclusion and respect for diversity.”

Readers may be interested in how Vatican Radio illustrated this report using a photograph from elsewhere -

http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2016/04/13/irish_bishops_to_political_leaders_tackle_child_poverty/1222417

Core Skills: Children's Ministry Course

The Church of Ireland Board of Education in conjunction with the Church of Ireland Theological Institute have organised a Core Skills Children's Ministry course which is aimed for all those working as leaders in Children's Ministry such as Sunday School and Bible Clubs. The course will help you to reflect on your ministry and give you new skills in working with children. There will also be an opportunity to look at resources available for children's ministry.

It will take place on Saturdays 7th May, 21st May and 4th June in St Columba's Parish Church, Omagh commencing at 10.30am and concluding at 3.00pm. Lunch will be provided. The cost is £45 per person, payable by cheque to Church of Ireland Children's Ministry Group or by electronic funds transfer (email Claire on c.geoghegan@diocoff-belfast.org).

Participants who attend all three sessions will receive a Church of Ireland Theological Certificate in Children's Ministry. Certificate is based on attendance only and no further work is required.

To book your place click on the link below to print off and post to Claire Geoghegan at Church of Ireland House, 61-67 Donegall Street, Belfast BT1 2QH. <http://clogher.anglican.org/pdfs/16468core%20skills%20course.pdf>

Work of the Holy Spirit focus of Pentecost lecture series

The Lay training department of the Church of Ireland Theological Institute has announced this year's Pentecost Theological Lecture series running across May 2016.

Facilitated by Rev Dr William Olhausen, the lecture series entitled "The work of the Holy Spirit as seen through the teachings of Paul", will take an in depth look at Paul's teaching on the Holy Spirit in the run up to Pentecost.

Each session will run from 11am to 1pm (with refreshments and lunch provided) at the Theological Institute. Do feel free to drop in for all three workshops or a stand-alone topic that is of interest. William will be covering the following teaching input...

Tuesday 3rd May. Wisdom, power and the cross: The Spirit and revelation.

Tuesday 10th May. Order, discipline and working miracles: The Spirit and love for people.

Tuesday 17th May. Money, sex and glory: The Spirit and love for God.

Cost: € 10.00 (waged). € 5.00 (un-waged).

For further information on the Pentecost Lecture Series 2016 or to book a place please email:

davidbrown@theologicalinstitute.ie

Pope Francis: The Church is not a community of 'perfect people'

The Church is not “a community of perfect people” but people who recognise they are “sinners” Pope Francis has said.

During his general audience in St Peter's Square yesterday, the Pope said that without a repentant heart, Christians can risk living out their faith superficially and fail to live out God's desire for “mercy, not sacrifice.”

Instead, Jesus' love for sinners shows that the church is not “a community of perfect people, but disciples on a path who follow the Lord because they recognise themselves as sinners and in need of his forgiveness,” the Pope said.

Jesus' mission is "to search for each one of us, to heal our wounds and call us to follow him with love," he said.

The Pope reflected on the Gospel passage, which recounted Jesus calling Matthew to follow him despite the fact he was a tax collector and considered a sinner by the people.

Jesus, he said, did not rebuke him for his past but dines with him and "opens up a new future."

"There is no saint without a past and there is not sinner without a future. This is beautiful; this is what Jesus does," he said.

However, like the scribes and Pharisees, there is also the temptation for Christians to fall into pride and arrogance and believe themselves better than others. For Christ, no sinner is excluded because "God's healing power knows no sickness that cannot be cured," the Pope said.

Jesus, he added, was not afraid of talking to sinners, tax collectors and prostitutes, thus revealing the true meaning behind the prophet Hosea's call for "mercy, not sacrifice."

"Those Pharisees were very religious in practice, but were unable to share a table with tax

collectors and sinners,” he said. “While being faithful guardians of the law, they had no knowledge of God’s heart.”

Pope Francis called on the faithful to “look with mercy” upon others while reminding them that “we are all disciples in need of experiencing and living the comforting words of Jesus.”

“We all need to be nourished by the mercy of God because our salvation comes from this source,” the Pope said.

New resources on encouraging vocations

Church leaders are being provided with more support to encourage congregations to discover God's call in their lives in a new set of resources published today by the Church of England.

Research and good practice gathered in dioceses on developing a range of vocations from lay and ordained ministry to religious life has been made available by the Church of England's [Church Support Hub](#).

The church wants to find new role models, increasing the number of minority ethnic vocations, young vocations, and encouraging women to take up more leadership roles.

Parish and diocesan leaders are encouraged to grow a pro-active culture of vocation by providing opportunities to get involved and praying and teaching about vocation.

The material has been published in advance of Vocations Sunday (April 17) when parishes ask congregations to reflect on God's call in their lives both in the Church of England and in the wider world.

Resources to encourage prayer for a renewal and increase in vocations throughout the Church of England have been launched in conjunction with the website.

'Prayer Postcards' to share with people seeking to discover their vocation and resources to mount seven days of prayer for vocations to ministry and other roles in the Church have been published on the [Church Print Hub](#).

The campaign comes after the General Synod backed moves to increase the number of candidates for ordination by 50% over the next five years and to increase the youthfulness and ethnic diversity of candidates.

The Bishop of Guildford, Andrew Watson, said: "Every Christian has a unique part to play in God's great plan of salvation, both through their church involvement and in their mission to the wider world.

"Vocations Sunday 2016 is a great day to reflect on what *our* part in that plan might be, at a time when our Church is urgently praying for an increase in the number and range of vocations, both lay and ordained."

Nigeria-born Martha Weatherill, a first year ordinand at St Stephen's House in Oxford, spoke of how her calling to be ordained was inspired after attending a Minority Ethnic Vocations Conference supported by the Committee for Minority Ethnic Anglican Concerns (CMEAC) and the Ministry Division of the Church of England.

"I've always served, doing one thing or another in the Church, but I saw myself as someone who

was going to graduate and get a job in the City as an accountant," she said.

"Four years ago when I was serving in a care home, a woman who was a resident said to me 'thank you so much for the Holy Communion service, without this we wouldn't get access to the Church or have communion.'

"At that point, I felt like a switch had been turned on, as if the Lord was saying to me that this was my destiny, this was what I was born to do."

News briefs

Following their recent workshops, [New Irish Arts](#) still have a small number of **places available in this year's youth choir**. They are offering one final opportunity to new applicants for this year. They have also decided to open the youth choir to boys who are currently in P6 – to offer them the possibility of being in the youth choir for longer before their voices break!. Anyone interested should email office@newirisharts.com as soon as possible and they will contact you to arrange an audition.

Earlier this year the death took place of **Theo Saunders**, Director of Music at St Patrick's C of I Cathedral, Armagh. Theo's mother died peacefully on Tuesday morning at his home in Armagh. She will be buried beside him on Saturday morning after a service in Armagh Cathedral.

The **Church's Ministry of Healing's annual Thanksgiving Service & Gift Day** takes place in St Michan's Church, at 3.00 pm on Saturday, 16th April 2016. This is a Service of Wholeness & Healing with Holy Communion, and there will be an opportunity for prayer ministry with the laying on of hands and anointing with oil for those who desire it. The celebrant will be the Rev Canon David Gillespie and the preacher will be Bishop Patrick Rooke. Everyone is invited to enjoy some light refreshments after the service.

As part of a Jubilee Pilgrimage with the **Icon of Our Mother of Perpetual Help** to the Cathedrals of Ireland, the Icon will visit **St Eugene's Cathedral, Derry**, from Mon 2 May to Tue 3 May 2016. Opening Liturgy and Veneration of the Icon at 4.30pm on Mon 2nd. Concelebrated Mass 7.30pm, Holy Hour 9.00pm. Tue 3rd: Morning Prayer 7.45am, Mass

8.00am, Concelebrated Mass 10.00am, closing with Veneration until 11.00am.

Maghera & Kilrea Rural Deanery is holding a Service of Dedication for churchwardens, glebewardens and Select Vestries in Saint Patrick's Church, Kilrea, at 6.30pm. The preacher is the Reverend Terence Kerr.

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

Funding for Twaddle group as loyalist protest escalates

Irish News -

More than £100,000 is to be paid to a community project at Twaddell Avenue, as a loyalist protest at the north Belfast interface escalates.

<http://www.irishnews.com/news/2016/04/07/news/funding-for-twaddell-group-as-loyalist-protest-escalates-477496/>

Kincora abuse probe disarray as second witness Colin Wallace rules out testifying

Belfast Telegraph

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/kincora-abuse-probe-disarray-as-second-witness-colin-wallace-rules-out-testifying-34622485.html>

Protest at Queen's University Belfast turns sour as senior staff member tries to climb over students

Belfast Telegraph

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/video-protest-at-queens-university-belfast-turns-sour-as-senior-staff-member-tries-to-climb-over-students-34623553.html>

Mourners line the streets to pay tribute to former Chief Scout Michael John Shinnick

Irish Examiner

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/breakingnews/ireland/video-mourners-line-the-streets-to-pay-tribute-to-former-chief-scout-michael-john-shinnick-729507.html>

More social work resources needed in child protection

Irish Times

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/more-social-work-resources-needed-in-child-protection-1.2608029>

Guard

Reports an interview with Charles Moore, the journalist who broke the story of the Archbishop of Canterbury's biological father. Mr Moore says that Archbishop Justin fully cooperated in the disclosure volunteering to take a DNA test and understanding the impact the revelation would have. "Archbishop Justin never said the issue was a private matter that he did not want disclosed. His

primary concern was the impact on his mother," Mr Moore added.

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/apr/12/justin-welby-fully-cooperated-revealing-identity-real-father>

Times/Exp/Even Stand/Tel

In the *Times*, commenter Alice Thompson argues we do not have to be helpless victims of our environment or biological make-up. We must shape our own lives, citing the life story of the Archbishop of Canterbury as an example. In the *Express*, Vanessa Feltz writes a short item on the Archbishop's family story. In the *ES*, Sarah Sands writes that the Archbishop gives a fine lesson in honesty and acceptance. The *Telegraph* publishes a profile of Archbishop Justin.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/lets-escape-from-the-nature-v-nurture-trap-jsm5rb1p6>

<http://www.express.co.uk/comment/columnists/vanessa-feltz/660323/Lynda-Bellingham-would-have-hated-the-family-feud-says-VANESSA-FELTZ>

<http://www.standard.co.uk/comment/comment/sarah-sands-envy-must-not-blind-us-to-the-bigger-tax-issues-a3223601.html>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/opinion/2016/04/12/the-fiery-cauldron-of-a-broken-family-shaped-a-remarkable-man/>

Christian Today/ITV/Premier/BBC

Reports that Dr Steven Croft has been appointed Bishop of Oxford (see News above). Currently the Bishop of Sheffield, he will take up the role later this year. Bishop Steven has been in his current position since 2009, and before that was the Archbishops' Missioner and Team Leader of Fresh Expressions.

<http://www.itv.com/news/calendar/update/2016-04-12/bishop-of-sheffield-leaving-south-yorkshire-to-become-bishop-of-oxford/>
<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/New-Bishop-of-Oxford-finally-announced>
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-36023758>

Times/FT/Reuters

Reports that the Church Commissioners are trying to force one of the world's largest oil companies to confront the risks from climate change policies. The Commissioners have pushed climate change on to the agenda for ExxonMobil's annual general meeting next month. They own Exxon shares worth £5.8 million and have filed a shareholder proposal urging the company to disclose the impact on its business of government policies intended to slow global warming.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/church-uses-shareholder-power-to-sway-oil-giant-on-climate-change-k5qm8dvpk>
http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/9ce69b32-0067-11e6-99cb-83242733f755.html?FTCamp=engage/CAP/webapp/Channel_Moreover//B2B#axzz45gJciTFR
<http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-investors-exxon-mobil-climatechange-idUKKCN0X90PQ>

Guard/Premier

Reports that social services have contacted the parents of at least six children at Leigh Church of England junior school in Greater Manchester after one of them complained to his mother that he'd been locked in a cupboard on his own as punishment. The school

confirmed it had met representatives from Wigan council and Greater Manchester police following the claims.

Chair of Governors, David Sanderson, is quoted saying they were taking the allegations very seriously.

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/apr/12/pupils-at-wigan-school-locked-in-cupboard-by-teacher-as-punishment>

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Church-school-accused-of-putting-pupils-in-cupboards>

Mirror/BBC/Exp/Mail

Coverage of Tuesday's Memorial service for the victims of terrorist attacks in Tunisia, held at Westminster Abbey. The Dean of Westminster, Dr John Hall, is quoted.

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/prince-harry-leads-emotional-memorial-7742097>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-36031121>

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/royal/660376/Prince-Harry-tributes-Britons-killed-Tunisia-terror-attacks-memorial-Westminster-Abbey>

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/ap/article-3536189/UKs-Prince-Harry-lays-wreath-Tunisia-attack-victims.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490

Premier

Reports that the Diocese of Canterbury is to create a new job which will offer more help and support to refugees. The diocese said the Refugee Projects Officer position would enhance the work already done by the Church in Kent and over the English Channel in Dover. The position has been developed in partnership with Migrant Help, Kent Refugee Action Network (KRAN). The Bishop of Dover is quoted.

<http://www.premier.org.uk/News/UK/Diocese-of-Canterbury-creates-new-refugee-support-role-after-60k-fundraising-effort>

Comment

Spectator: Can Christianity be translated into a few core rules?

<http://blogs.spectator.co.uk/2016/04/should-pope-francis-argue-for-core-rules-within-christianity/>

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