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**Image of the day - St Giles and the Saltire**

**Joint St Andrew's Day declaration on cooperation  
between Presbyterians and Anglicans in Scotland**

## News Reports

### **St Andrew's Day marked with Declaration and special services in Scotland**

**St Andrew's Day, the third day of Advent this year, was marked with the signing of a joint Declaration between the Church of Scotland and the Scottish Episcopal Church during a special service at St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral.**

The service included Lord Wallace, the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and Most Rev Mark Strange, the Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church, officially endorsing the St Andrew Declaration on behalf of the two churches.

The Declaration outlines a series of acknowledgments and commitments between the churches intended to deepen their relationship, and look at new ways of working together to serve the people of Scotland.

This year's General Assembly of the Church of Scotland voted to welcome the agreement, which was also then passed at the General Synod of the Scottish Episcopal Church in June.

Rev Prof Canon Charlotte Methuen from the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Rev Sandy Horsburgh from the Church of Scotland led the service.

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Lord Jim Wallace, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, with Most Rev Mark Strange, Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church.

Rev Sandy Horsburgh, who is the Church of Scotland's Convener of the Ecumenical Relations Committee, said: "This is a genuinely exciting and important step forward for our two churches.

"We're celebrating the huge amount we hold in common, especially our common calling to minister to all the people of Scotland.

"And we're valuing and being enriched by the different strengths we are each bringing into this relationship.

"Working together, we will be more effective in mission and service and more faithful to the call of Christ."

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A conference took place during the day.

## **Our common calling**

Lord Wallace said: "I am delighted to be able to sign the Declaration on St Andrew's Day in person alongside our friends in the Scottish Episcopal Church as we celebrate the close-working relationship between our two churches.

"We look forward in faithfulness to continuing to strengthen the ties, which already have deep foundations, and exploring our common calling further."

The choir of St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh led the music.

A separate service also took place at St Cuthbert's Parish Church in Edinburgh at 2pm in conjunction with St Andrew's Scots Memorial Church in Jerusalem. It was led by Very Rev Martin Fair and Rev Muriel Pearson, Associate Minister of St Andrew's Jerusalem and Tiberias, who spoke on the links between Scotland and The Holy Land.

## **‘Suffering passes but memory remains’ – Service of Light in Arklow acknowledges pain of grief in the pandemic**

Grief in the pandemic has layers and layers of added pain. This was the message at a special Service of Light in St Saviour's Church in Arklow yesterday (Sunday November 28) acknowledging the impact that the pandemic has had on grieving. The service was held for those in the Diocese of

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Clergy at the Service of Light in St Saviour's Church in Arklow – the Revd Suzanne Harris, Archdeacon Neal O'Raw, the Revd Arthur Barrett and Canon Lesley Robinson.

Glendalough who had lost loved ones over the last 20 months and gave space for people to recognise their grief and loss.

Introducing the service the Archdeacon of Glendalough the Ven Neal O'Raw, who represented the Archbishop, said that globally we continue to fight the pandemic and globally we remember those who have died because of it. "But here today we hope you will be able to begin to move on. Grief is

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not a simple thing. It begins in steps and it ends in steps. We hope this service will be helpful to you today,” he said.

In her address, Canon Lesley Robinson, chairperson of Dublin Bereavement Support Services (a free service which provides bereavement counselling) shared her experience of grief. She said it was not until you had experienced grief that you could understand the magnitude of the pain. She said that while her own faith sustained her, the faith and prayers of others was also important.

“I was comforted by the rituals of death which we in this country are so good at. I remember the strength I got from looking at the people who had come to the funeral and from those who approached me afterwards with words and gestures of comfort,” she explained adding that the gatherings after the funeral enabled stories to be told. “All of those things that are so helpful, particularly in the early days of grief, were taken away from us by Covid. All of you who have lost loved ones have had all of that taken from you by the necessary restrictions imposed,” she added.

“None of us should grieve alone. Yet this is what we are asked to do. Even now without the same restrictions we still cannot gather together after loss. The experience of grief continues to be depleted and diminished. Today, in addition to remembering the lives of loved ones we have lost we are also invited to pause at the foot of the cross on Good Friday... Take the time to realise that you are in a place of darkness but realise that it will not be so forever,” she said urging people who struggled with grief to get help.

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### The Revd Suzanne Harris lighting a candle during the Liturgy of Remembrance at the Service of Light

As part of the Liturgy of Remembrance, the Rector of Arklow the Revd Arthur Barrett read out the names of almost 60 people who had died in parishes in Glendalough since the start of the pandemic. Prayers were led by the Priest in Charge of the Castlemacadam Group of Parishes, the Revd Suzanne Harris. Members of the congregation were invited to come forward to light a candle in memory of their loved ones. The Archdeacon said: “These lights in their brightness are only symbols but as they burn and finally go out, we remember that suffering passes, though memory remains forever”.

During the service soloist Michael Flood, accompanied on the organ by Stephen Adams, sang a number of hymns and

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songs including 'Be still, my soul: the Lord is on thy side', 'I watch the sunrise', 'Pie Jesu' and 'Lord of all hopefulness'.

A similar service took place in Christ Church Cathedral earlier in the month. Anyone looking for support in dealing with grief can access counselling at <https://bereavementsupport.ie/>

## **First Minister Givan won't deny he has resigned from Free Presbyterian Church after dispute**

**DUP First Minister Paul Givan has declined to deny reports that he has resigned from the Free Presbyterian Church, Mark Bain writes in the Belfast Telegraph.**

A retired leading minister from the church and former prominent member of the DUP said he had been made aware that the Lagan Valley MLA has left in a dispute over last month's cross-community Northern Ireland centenary service in Armagh.

Rev Ivan Foster, who split from the DUP over the decision to share power with Sinn Fein, said he had been made aware the First Minister had resigned after being spoken to by the church's elders in Lisburn.

Mr Givan was criticised by the church for his attendance at the ecumenical service held in Armagh to mark the formation of Northern Ireland.



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But Mr Givan said it was “an issue that I don't intend to make public commentary about”.

While the DUP has not commented, saying the matter is a private one for Mr Givan, his resignation signals that ongoing tensions between unionist political leadership and the Free Presbyterian Church show no signs of healing, though Mr Givan could still attend the church as a non-member.

The Free Presbyterian Church said it was unaware of the situation, and it would be a matter for Mr Givan's own session to deal with.

“This is a private matter,” said Mr Givan, speaking on BBC Radio Ulster.

“It is something I have worked through with my own church. “This for me is an issue where first and foremost I regard the Gospel as being of fundamental importance.

“My own personal circumstances are secondary to that. “I would never want to say anything in a public way which would diminish that Gospel witness. That's why I don't intend to make any further public commentary around this particular issue.”

Mr Givan had been criticised by some within the church for his attendance at the centenary event in Armagh, but stood by his decision to attend. “When the invitation came in it was obviously something I considered and I took the view that it was appropriate for me as First Minister to attend that event. I subsequently did attend that event.”

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When contacted by the Belfast Telegraph, Rev Foster said he stood by his claim.

“I have been told by a minister that as far as he knows Mr Givan was spoken to by his session about his attendance at the ecumenical service in Armagh and he has since resigned his membership of the Free Presbyterian Church,” Mr Foster said.

He added that he was “thankful and heartened if it is so that the elders in this case acted”.

Mr Foster has a long association with the Free Presbyterian Church in Fermanagh and Tyrone after being ordained a minister in 1968.

A row between former DUP and church leader Ian Paisley and senior Free Presbyterians, ultimately saw the unionist figurehead break ties with the church he founded.

Mr Foster's comments demonstrate the growing uneasiness within the Free Presbyterian Church over the links to the DUP.

In 2018 South Belfast MLA Christopher Stalford was rebuked by his own minister for his attendance alongside then DUP leader Arlene Foster at the Ulster GAA Final. Further questions were raised over the DUP's selection of its first openly gay councillor when Alison Bennington took a seat on Antrim, Newtownabbey Council.

Mrs Foster's abstention in an Assembly vote on gay conversion therapy further agitated religious sections of the

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party's grassroots and Mrs Foster was ousted as party leader just a few days later.

Mr Foster has been a DUP councillor on Omagh District Council and won a seat in the Assembly elections of 1982 in Fermanagh and South Tyrone.

He was also one of the founders of Ulster Resistance in the mid-1980s.

Ahead of the October 21 inter-denominational service to mark Northern Ireland's centenary at Armagh Cathedral, current Free Presbyterian moderator Rev John Armstrong described the event as “arranged to promote the purposes of unscriptural ecumenism”.

“Such ecumenical union does not represent the views of thousands of Ulster Protestants who do not accept the Roman Catholic Church as a Christian Church. Our opposition to fellowship with Roman Catholicism is theological,” he said.

Courtesy the Belfast Telegraph

## **Cork diocese calls for funeral ministry teams in every parish**

**New guidelines on funeral ministry in the diocese of Cork and Ross call for the introduction of funeral ministry teams in all parishes.**

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The guidelines also update regulations around the repose of the deceased in a church, warning that churches are not to be used as funeral homes.

The changes come after extensive collaboration between clergy, parishes and funeral directors, said Fr Bernard Cotter, who helped create the Ministry to the Bereaved: A Mission for us all policy document.

“Sometimes people forget that funerals take an immense toll on priests once they give themselves to the ministry and really support and help people,” Fr Cotter said. “It’s great to have the help of others in this challenging, but very rewarding work.”

Speaking on changes around the repose of the body in the church, Fr Cotter stressed that “the church is supposed to be a place of worship, not a funeral home”, acknowledging that “it’s a decision that people will find difficult to accept”.

## People and places

### Knock Parish welcome senior school staff on Advent Sunday

Knock Parish gave a warm welcome to representatives of local schools who were invited to read the lessons at Sunday’s Advent Carol Service in St Columba’s.

“It was a great joy to welcome senior staff to the parish and to convey our continued prayers to all those involved in our

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Pictured above, L–R: Alison Acheson (Head of Home Economics at Our Lady and St. Patrick’s College Knock), Nicola Connery (Principal of Strathearn), The Revd Canon John Auchmuty (Rector), Ruth McCartney (Head of Music at Methodist College), Chris Oswald (Vice Principal of Campbell College), Gary Greer (Principal of Bloomfield Collegiate).

local schools at this challenging time,” said the rector, Canon John Auchmuty.

“The service provided great hope through the inspirational music led by the Parish Organist and Choral Director, Dr. Joe McKee, the Cantors and Parish Choir. We also lit the first of the Advent Candles which symbolises hope.”

Following the service everyone enjoyed some refreshments outside in the church grounds.



Fermanagh Choral Society  
*presents*

 **Carols in**   
**The Cathedral**  

**David Robertson**

*Musical Director*

**Lynsey McCrea**

*Accompanist*

**Friday 10 December at 8 pm in Enniskillen Cathedral**

*Free admission, donations to Fermanagh Choral Society and  
St Macartin's Cathedral Organ Fund welcome*



# Knitted Bible Story Exhibition

A display by Fiona Storer

This unique knitted display depicts 30 different stories from the Bible in a fun and creative way. The creator of the exhibition is registered blind and hopes to inspire others to develop their own talents.

## Larne Museum & Arts Centre

Wed 1st Dec 2021 to Wed 5th Jan 2022

Larne Museum & Arts Centre, 2 Victoria Road, Larne, BT40 1RN.  
Opening Hours: Mon - Fri, 10.00am - 3.00pm. Free admission.  
T: 028 28 262443. E: [marian.kelso@midandeantrim.gov.uk](mailto:marian.kelso@midandeantrim.gov.uk)



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# Diocesan Magazine



Cashel Ferns Leighlin Lismore Ossory Waterford

## Christmas Blessings



### Parish Profile - Kells



- \* Dean of Ossory appointed
- \* New Warden of Readers
- \* Christmas Without More 'Stuff'
- \* Including The Outsider
- \* The Curate's Christmas Cake Recipe
- \* Quiz Time - Armchair and Kells



### Diocesan Synod 2021 Report



*Depending on the angels to sing again this Christmas*

The December issue of Cashel Ferns and Ossory Diocesan Magazine out this week. Online cope at



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[https://cashel.anglican.org/december-issue-of-our-diocesan-magazine-out-this-week/?utm\\_source=dlvr.it&utm\\_medium=facebook](https://cashel.anglican.org/december-issue-of-our-diocesan-magazine-out-this-week/?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=facebook)

## Youth Development Officer moving on



Staff in Church of Ireland House, Belfast, gathered on Monday 29 November to say farewell to Tim Burns who is leaving the diocese after almost eight years as Down and Dromore's Youth Development Officer.

Tim is taking up a post with Alternatives – Restorative Justice where he will work with at-risk young people in the Belfast area.

During his time with the diocese Tim developed the SERVE Young Leaders Course and co-authored two further youth resources – The Jesus Sessions and (coming soon) Resonance. He pioneered our bi-monthly Saturday Night Live youth event and led the Kilbroney Adventure Camps and Weekend Blast. Pivotal to the Confirmation Programme, [churchnewsireland@gmail.org](mailto:churchnewsireland@gmail.org)

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Simon Henry (CIYD), Tim Burns and Christina Bailie (Connor DYO)

Tim was a popular figure with our young people and young adults and a much-valued member of the diocesan team.

At the special coffee morning to say goodbye, Bishop David McClay presented Tim with a gift from all his colleagues in Church House. Wishing him well in this new challenge he said:

“We applaud you Tim for the step you’re taking but nevertheless we will really miss your friendship, your wisdom and your input into the life and work of this diocese. However, we look forward to working closely with you in the future as you help us to develop something that will enable us to work with the most vulnerable of young people and young adults.”



## Poem for today

### Underground Neighbours by Rowan Williams

This brand-new piece from Rowan Williams's Collected Poems is the second of two poetic sketches of a busy tube carriage. On a hot day, "heat peels back clothes" to reveal tattoos, hinting at the dreams of the travellers who have them, their lives, their deaths (think of all those clichéd designs: "skulls", "a stabbed heart"), and what might come after. If the body is a temple, here the tattooed body becomes a mysterious cathedral, one where "guidebooks aren't on sale".

Underground Neighbours (Northern Line), II  
Heat peels back clothes and unembarrassed skin  
faces the air, the secret messages laid out  
for browsing; skulls, serpents, butterflies,  
names in badly spelled Gothic, flowers,  
crucifixions, hearts; flesh wrapped  
In a cathedral's worth of signage.

The doors are open for the interested tourist,  
though guidebooks aren't on sale. What moves  
in skin (it seems) is older than you thought,  
a long procession of the dreams that you're  
supposed to leave behind, the crypts, the cryptograms  
leaving their punctured trail, joining the dots  
where blood has dried quietly: the skulls,

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the butterflies, the names that say  
there is a story somewhere telling you  
why the blood runs away, why the skin  
loses its blush and dries, and you  
have to guess if what is left is bone  
or flower, someone else's name or  
someone else's death, a stabbed heart leaking,  
drop by fat drop, to join up wounds  
or wash the buried dreams, puncture  
locked cellars with a needle light.

Heat peels the covers, lays them neatly back:  
Read me, you say, like a book, that is,  
Slowly, uncertainly, turning back often.

From 'Collected Poems' (Carcenet, £15.99)

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