

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Winter flowers

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Winter flowers

Beautiful winter flowers adorn the woodland floor of the Yorkshire Arboretum in North Yorkshire. White snowdrops, with their drooping heads, and yellow winter aconites from the buttercup family, both flower between January and March. This superb photo was taken by John Grimshaw, North Yorkshire gardener, Director of the Yorkshire Arboretum and Tree Health Centre, Editor of Trees and Shrubs Online. <https://www.instagram.com/johnmgrimshaw/>

People and places

Dean of Clogher presents £6000 to Air Ambulance charity

Part of the proceeds from the Dean of Clogher's Christmas sit-out has been presented to one of the charities.

A cheque for £6,000 was presented to Mr. George Irvine, for Air Ambulance Northern Ireland, at the morning service on 22nd January in St. Macartin's Cathedral, Enniskillen.

Dean Kenneth Hall and local volunteers from the Fermanagh area had visited the Air Ambulance base near Lisburn on the day before to see the work of the charity



which operates in partnership with the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service to provide helicopter emergency support in serious and life threatening situations across the Province. The service costs around £5,500 per day to run and the crew of the helicopter comprises a pilot, doctor and paramedic 12 hours a day, 365 days a year. Dean Hall raised £18,000 from his Christmas sit-out at the gates of the Cathedral for three charities.

Support for Yei Diocese and CMSI from Connor Council for Mission

Archdeacon Paul Dundas, chair of Connor Council for Mission, recently visited the offices of CMS Ireland to



Archdeacon Paul Dundas presents a cheque to Jenny Smyth of CMS Ireland and her colleagues.

present a cheque to support CMSI and projects in Connor's partner diocese of Yei, South Sudan.

Paul is a long-time supporter and friend of CMSI. The link with Yei, formed in 2007, will formally end this June, and last summer Connor Diocese welcomed Bishop Levi of Yei and his wife Agnes during CMSI's Kingdom Voices event.

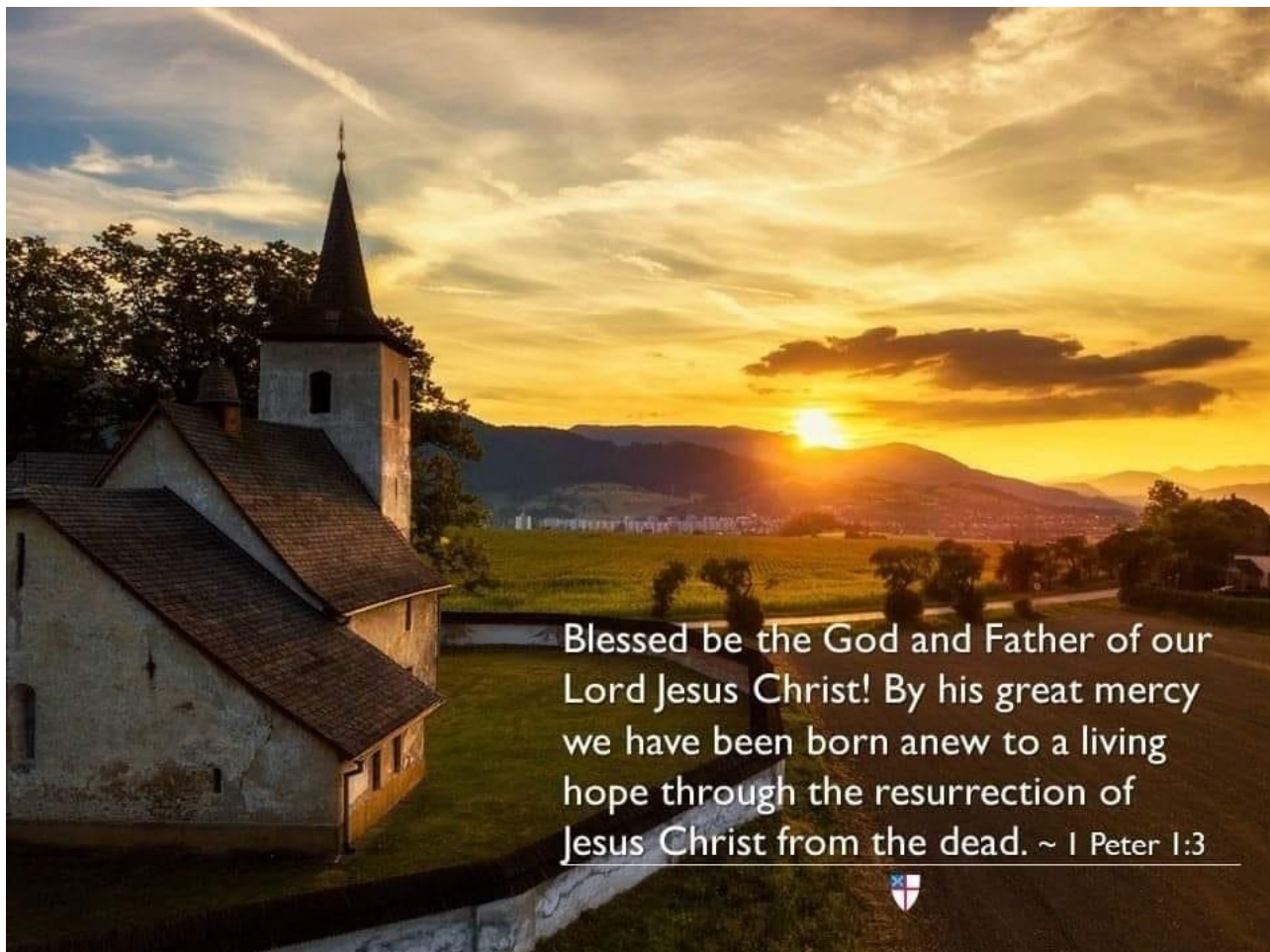
The bishop and his wife were hosted by Agherton Parish and Lisburn Cathedral, with time to meet with Bishop George Davison and enjoy worship together at a cross-cultural celebration in St Anne's Cathedral, Belfast.

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During his visit to CMSI, Paul shared the moment that he and Bishop Levi realised they had met before, 23 years earlier! He was telling the bishop about his visit to Uganda with Armagh Diocese in 2000, when he had the opportunity to teach a class at Bishop Allison Theological College in Arua. “I was there!” said Bishop Levi – he was studying at the college at that time!

As part of the partnership, Connor Council for Mission designated a gift for Yei Diocese, and for CMSI, and during his visit Paul presented a cheque for £1,750 which was gratefully received.

The gift for Yei will be transferred for Bishop Levi’s two priority programmes – coffee planting for financial



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sustainability of the diocese, and clergy training for spiritual growth of the diocese.

CMSI expressed thanks to Connor Council for Mission for long-term partnership with CMSI and for its generosity in supporting the organisation and the Diocese of Yei.



Bishop goes back to school

Bishop Adrian Wilkinson of Cashel, Ferns & Ossory, having been enthroned in five cathedrals recently, returned to his roots and later commented - "I went back to my old school today. I was delighted to visit the pupils and staff of St Mary's National School with the rector of Enniscorthy, Canon Nicola Halford. Viewed a display about the church on the wall too".

The Parish of Enniskillen
St Macartin's Cathedral



The church will be open from 9am until 9pm.

There will be services of:

- *Morning prayer at 9am,*
 - *Evening prayer at 5:30pm,*
 - *Compline at 8:30pm.*

You can come along for private prayer at any time.

In the side chapel:

- *Prayer spaces and resources to help you pray for Air Ambulance, Water Drops, and the world.*
- *Prayer craft activities for children of Sunday school age.*

You will find prayer prompts in every pew to help you:

- pray for the Church, the Parish, the Diocese, and Enniskillen
- using the Bible, the Book of Common Prayer, the Cathedral News and the Diocesan Magazine

Between 6:30-7:30pm our prayers will be accompanied and inspired by a selection of prayerful music and hymns.

EVERYONE WELCOME

Methodist President responds following Turkey/Syria earthquake

The Revd David Nixon, the President of the Methodist Church in Ireland said - We have been horrified and saddened to see the devastation in Turkey and bordering Syria following the earthquakes. Our hearts go out to all who have lost loved ones, to those who are still hoping that their family members are still alive and will be rescued.

Let us pray for all who are affected by this, those who have been bereaved, those who have been injured, for all the rescue workers, for the emergency medical staff, for the Government, for those who are trying to restore utilities as quickly as possible to relieve the suffering of those who are living through this, and for all who have lost their homes and property. Let us pray for all the aid agencies, including Christian Aid's partners who are working hard to bring relief and who will have a huge amount of work to do in the days, weeks and months ahead as people begin to rebuild their shattered lives and property.

As we inevitably feel moved to act and do what we can; please pray and, if you can, give.

Irish Methodist World Development & Relief has already sanctioned a £5,000 contribution from reserves.

We are asking that you donate via World Development & Relief's sister agency Christian Aid Ireland's Emergency Appeal.

News reports

‘We build with God, the master builder’ – C of I Pioneer Ministry launched at National Cathedral



The newly commissioned Pioneer Ministry Team with the archbishops: Archdeacon Barry Forde, Archbishop John McDowell, Archbishop Andy John, Archbishop Michael Jackson, Ingrid Brennan and the Revd Rob Jones.

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A new chapter in the Church of Ireland's mission to reach people with little or no connection to church opened on Sunday afternoon (February 5) when Pioneer Ministry was formally launched in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.

As part of this special service of Choral Evensong, the Pioneer Ministry's leadership team was commissioned by the Archbishops of Armagh and Dublin before a full congregation.

Pioneer Ministry will encourage, support and release volunteer and paid pioneers and new ministries to share the good news of Jesus Christ in new places and in different ways. With the endorsement of the House of Bishops and generous funding secured from the Representative Body, the initiative is being led by a National Director, the Revd Rob Jones, assisted by Archdeacon Barry Forde and Ingrid Brennan.

As the service commenced, a representative of each of the Church's 11 dioceses lit a candle of hope which will be presented to every diocesan bishop over the coming months.

The service was sung by the Lay Vicars Choral of St Patrick's and included a special contemporary musical piece, 'We sing as one', sung by Sadhdbh Denny with accompaniment by Taylor Mehl and Caitlín Escobar.

The congregational hymns were 'We have a gospel to proclaim', 'Lord, you give the Great Commission', and 'Go forth and tell! O Church of God, awake!' The lessons were



The Pioneer Ministry Team is commissioned by the Archbishop of Armagh and the Archbishop of Dublin.

read by Bishop Patrick Rooke (from Isaiah chapter 42) and Church Army's Dr Elli Wort (from Hebrews chapters 11 and 12).

The guest preacher was the Archbishop of Wales, the Most Revd Andy John, who opened his sermon by highlighting the need for good foundations. "It seems to be that today offers an opportunity for us to further strengthen the life of God's Church on these islands," he remarked.

Archbishop John noted that the current sense of crisis in our world made the Church's role of presenting the Light of the World and Hope of the Nations "all the more pressing". He spoke of the place of bringing new life into ancient stories

and ancient places (drawing on the spiritual search made by young people during the Covid–19 pandemic), and the need for good stewardship to discern the potential for growth and fruitfulness – in the hope “that God is able to do more than we ask or imagine.”

He concluded by reflecting on the prevenient nature of God – that we are God’s handiwork and “invited to participate in the work of God” in ways that are courageous, risky and intelligent. “Let us not manage God out of the equation but let’s discover that there is a way that fruitfulness comes unexpectedly,” he suggested. A poet coming into a community to explore its spiritual history, a prayer gathering for patients in a hospital, or a ministry in a school or a college could be among the areas where we find God is already at work. Pioneers need to be “the wonderfully creative people that they are and we need to be at their side.”

Concluding, he encouraged all involved to have “a confident humility that knows that as we build together, we do not do so alone ... we build with God the Master Builder and with his grace, break new ground for the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”

Prayers were led by the Revd Rebecca Hamilton, Canon Phil Potter, Sarah Louise Hockey (Church Army evangelist), Canon Dr Maurice Elliott (Director of the Church of Ireland Theological Institute), Lucy Reid (Leader of 24/7 Prayer Ireland), David Ritchie (Chief Officer of the Representative Church Body), Dom Perrem (Director of Alpha Ireland), and Romila Ghosh (UCD Young Adults).



11 candles were lit at the start of the service - one for each diocese.

A collection was taken for Jobcare, a charity which explores and finds ways to give unemployed people the skills, training and support needed to find work.

Speaking afterwards at a reception for the congregation, Bishop David McClay, who chairs the Pioneer Ministry Council, thanked Dean William Morton and his Cathedral colleagues for their warm welcome at the service, and the leaders who had brought the initiative to this point. In particular, he thanked Bishop Patrick Rooke, Bishop Alan Abernethy, Trevor Douglas and Canon Phil Potter who “took the lead in really laying a foundation”. Addressing the new team, he added: “I could say ‘it’s over to you’ but actually

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what I want to say is that ‘it’s over to all of us’.” Bishop David concluded with his hope that the people who will benefit the most from Pioneer Ministry “will be those beyond our church buildings who will experience something of the grace and kindness and love and goodness of God.”

Archbishop John McDowell welcomed the Church doing this together: “It will only work if we recognise that fruitfulness in one part of the body is fruitfulness in every part of the body.” Archbishop Michael Jackson saw pioneering as the next chapter to be written after the Church marked the 150th anniversary of its Disestablishment with the theme of ‘being free to shape our own future’. He commented: “Now we really have the opportunity ... to work in that sense of bringing together adventure and tradition in what now will become a further strapline of the Church of Ireland, which is pioneering.”

The Revd Rob Jones concluded by thanking all those who helped to put the service together and expressed how honoured and excited he was to be moving into the role of Pioneer Ministry National Director. He added: “The next important task is to get the vision out there and especially commence the job of supporting dioceses and communicate how they can get involved. Each context is very different, so we will be learning from each other in a spirit of unity and collaboration.”

[Pioneer Ministry website](#)

He mentioned their new website – www.pioneerministry.org – and that the leadership team will be in touch as soon as everything begins and as this movement grows over time.

King Charles' first Royal Maundy service will be at York Minster

The Dean of York, the Very Revd Dominic Barrington, has expressed his delight that the first Royal Maundy service in the reign of His Majesty The King will take place at York Minster on Thursday 6 April. His Majesty will be accompanied by Her Majesty The Queen Consort.

74 men and 74 women (signifying the age of the Monarch) selected from Church of England dioceses across the country, and Anglican and Ecumenical partners across the UK, will receive the Maundy, a gift from The King, to thank them for their outstanding Christian service and for making a difference to the lives of people in their local communities.

Maundy Thursday commemorates Jesus Christ washing the feet of his disciples at the Last Supper. The service is rooted in the ancient history and traditions of the church.

Commenting on the service, Dean Dominic said: "We are honoured that His Majesty has chosen York Minster to be his cathedral church for the first Maundy Service of his reign.

Taking place in Holy Week, this historic service symbolises, humility, care, kindness and appreciation of others. The King's Maundy gift will be a moment of celebration and thanksgiving for 148 exceptional people who have made an impact in their communities."

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The late Queen distributed the Royal Maundy at York Minster on two occasions: first on 30 March 1972 and again on 5 April 2012, during her Diamond Jubilee Year. A plaque commemorating both visits can be found on the Queen's Path between St William's College and York Minster.

C of E to consider gender-neutral God

The Church of England is setting up a commission to consider whether to stop referring to God as "He" in prayers, after some priests asked to be allowed to use gender-neutral terms instead.

The commission will begin in the Spring and any changes would need to be voted through by General Synod.

Rev Miranda Threlfall-Holmes is a member of Synod and also acting Archdeacon of Liverpool. In a comment to the press she said :

"There's certainly no suggestion that we're going to stop the use of male language for God, obviously Jesus was male and the word 'Father' is used quite a lot in the Bible.

"What the Church of England are looking at is increasing the range of our liturgy so that some of the other biblical images that are used for God, such as the idea of God as a mother hen, God as a woman looking for a lost coin, are also in there along with some of the other imagery.



“I would say this isn't new and I think it's quite funny that it's front page news. I started Theological College 25 years ago and we've been talking about this for a very, very long time.

“Our pronouns are very familiar, but they also domesticate God. So the danger is that we end up talking in a very chummy way about God as Father, and God sometimes as a bloke.

“God is God and Christian theology has always been that God is beyond gender, God is beyond male and female, it's there in Genesis. God made male and female in God's own image.

“It is difficult, but I think the use of Hebrew God does end up creating in people's imaginations an idea that God is male, which is actually not true, and has never been considered true, and can be quite unhelpful for some people.”

A Church of England spokesperson said :

"Christians have recognised since ancient times that God is neither male nor female. Yet the variety of ways of addressing and describing God found in scripture has not always been reflected in our worship."

But he added that there were "absolutely no plans to abolish or substantially revise" authorised services and that no changes could be made without "extensive legislation".

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

Survey for Safer Internet

Stranmillis University College and the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland have launched a survey seeking the views of young people about their experiences online.

It takes less than 20 minutes to complete and can be found at this link.

[www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/growing-up-online-ni]

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The survey runs until 4pm on Friday, 28th February.
You can find out more about how to use the internet more safely at www.saferinternetday.org

C of E Daily Prayer app

Daily Prayer is the official app to help you follow Morning, Evening and Night Prayer, wherever you are.

Find out more at cofe.io/DailyPrayerApp.

Poem for today

Afternoon in February by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

The day is ending,
The night is descending;
The marsh is frozen,
The river dead.

Through clouds like ashes
The red sun flashes
On village windows
That glimmer red.

The snow recommences;
The buried fences
Mark no longer
The road o'er the plain;

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While through the meadows,
Like fearful shadows,
Slowly passes
A funeral train.

The bell is pealing,
And every feeling
Within me responds
To the dismal knell;

Shadows are trailing,
My heart is bewailing
And tolling within
Like a funeral bell.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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