

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Snowdrops at Bellefield

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Snowdrops at Bellefield

The renowned architect and garden designer Angela Jupe, who died in 2021, left her house and gardens at Bellefield, Shinrone, Co Offaly to the Royal Horticultural Society of Ireland (RHSI). As well as a house and cottages, the grounds include a 2 acre walled garden with a noted collection of perennial plants and rare bulbs, pasture, forestry, a bog area managed for biodiversity and a plantation of native trees.

There will be various open days this year, starting with some in February for Snowdrop season. Bellefield has one of the finest collections in Ireland of both named and naturalised snowdrops. Keep an eye on our brand new Instagram page @rhsibellefield for updates.

RHSI Bellefield, Shinrone, Offaly
[<https://rhsi.ie/rhsi-bellefield/>]

People and places

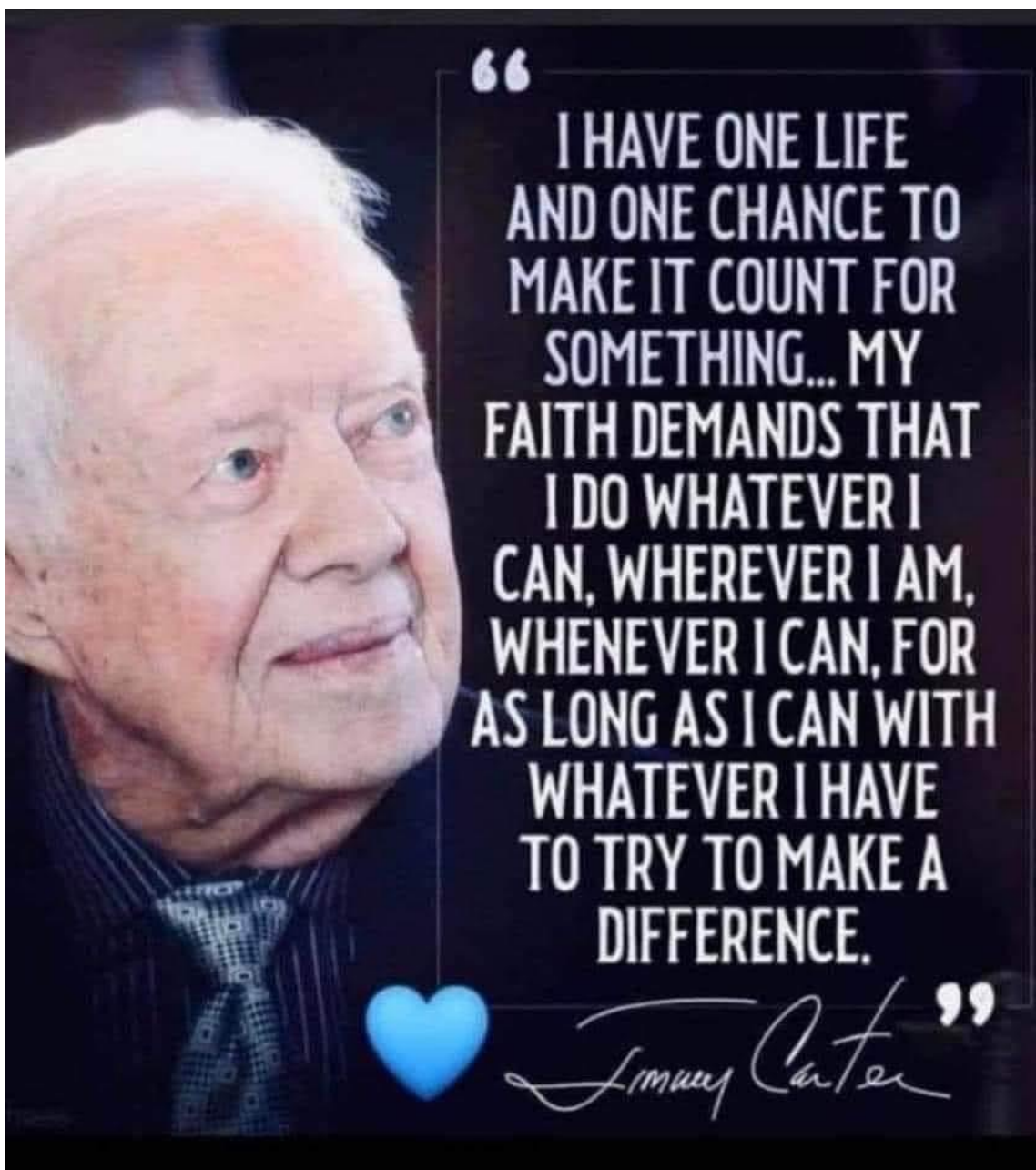
Belfast Methody Chapel Choir to sing at The Coronation

Methodist College's Chapel Choir has been invited to provide girl choristers to sing with the choirs of Westminster Abbey and HM Chapel Royal, St James's

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Palace at the Coronation of Their Majesties The King and The Queen Consort, along with girls from Truro Cathedral Choir.

Ruth McCartney, Director of Music said, 'We feel very honoured to be chosen to participate in this historic occasion. To perform in Westminster Abbey at the Coronation is a tremendous opportunity and something our singers will never forget. An audition process will now begin. The girls will be working very hard to make every



M.C.B.



Chapel Choir 2022~2023

note secure and it is an honour to be able to support them throughout this once in a lifetime experience. They will be fine ambassadors for Methody and for Northern Ireland.'

Mrs Jenny Lendrum, The Principal said, 'We are delighted that Methodist College pupils have been chosen to sing. It is such a privilege for girls from our Chapel Choir to join the choirs of Westminster Abbey and HM Chapel Royal. It will be an amazing experience for them and a memory they will have for life. We look forward to hearing all about the preparations, listening to their rehearsals and seeing them perform on Saturday 6th May in Westminster Abbey'.

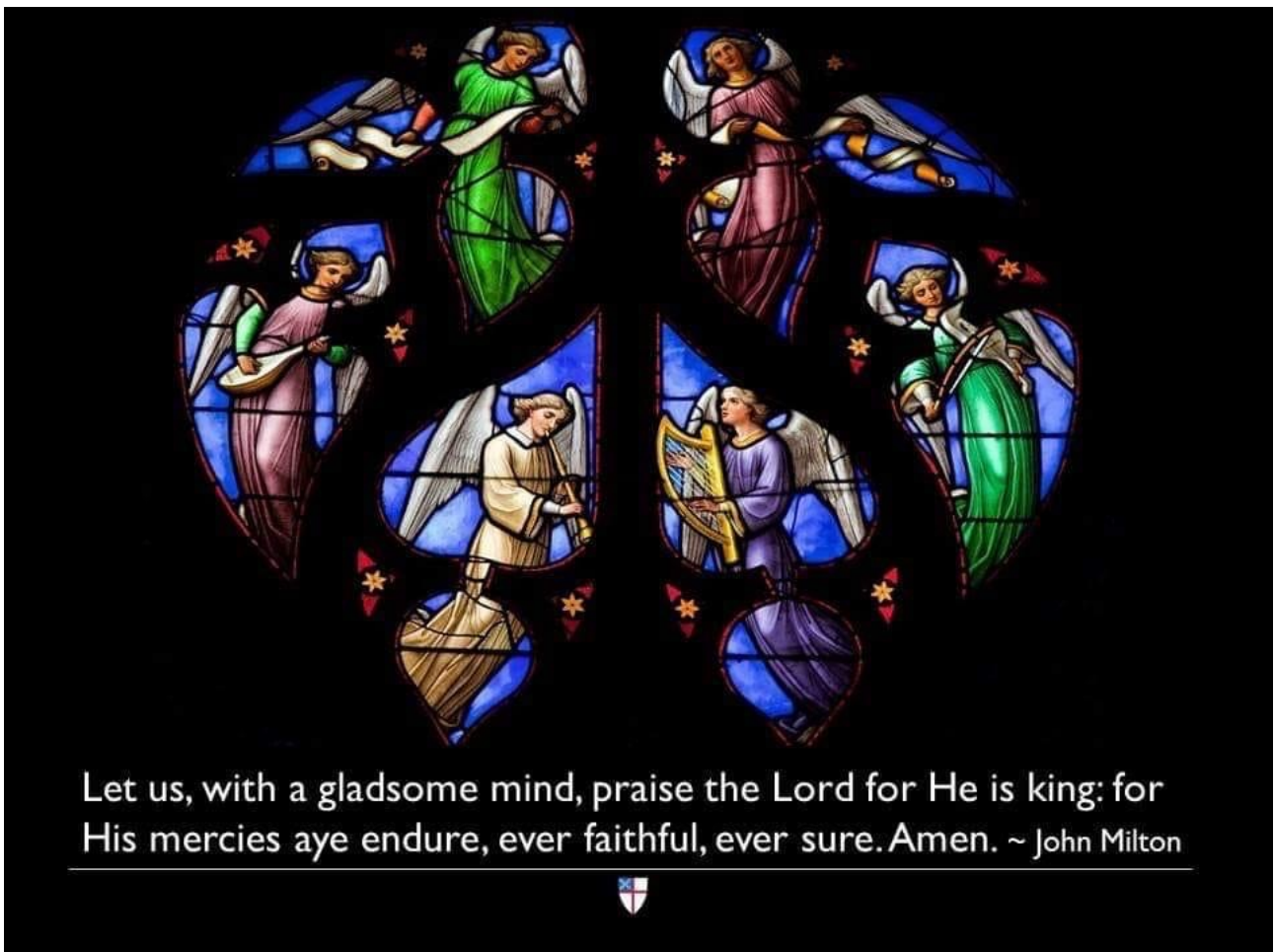
The Chapel Choir is the busiest of 5 choirs in Methody. It concentrates mainly on liturgical music and has established

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a strong reputation through frequent radio and television broadcasts e.g. the Chapel Choir will provide the music morning service on Radio 4 on ST Patrick's Day and for this year's Easter Sunday RTE TV morning service.

The choir has sung in various English Cathedrals and in 2016 returned to Westminster Abbey for its eleventh residency in recent years. Under Ruth McCartney MBE, the Choir has been Songs of Praise Senior School Choir of the Year, UTV Grammar School Choir of the Year and RTE All Island School Choir of the Year. Methody regularly produces both organ and choral scholars for Oxbridge Colleges and Cathedrals.

Although regular recitals and concerts are seen as important, the choir fulfils an important role in the spiritual



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life of the Methodist College community. In addition to annual events such as Carol Services and Prize Distributions, the choir provides music at weddings, funerals and memorial services in the college's Chapel of Unity. This choir often joins with the College's Senior Choir to perform large-scale choral works with the College Orchestra eg. Schubert's Mass in G, Rutter's Requiem, Mozart Requiem, Stopford's Missa Deus Nobiscum (commissioned by Methody to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the opening of the College) and, on March 8th, the Irish première of Howard Goodall's Unconditional Love, in Belfast's Waterfront Hall.

The Chapel Choir has visited the USA three times in the last eight years. In October 2010 they went on a 3-centre tour with the Girls Choir and Irish traditional Group to New York, Washington and Philadelphia, while 24 members of the Chapel Choir sang in the US première of Karl Jenkins' Gloria in Carnegie Hall in 2011. In 2015 The choir returned to Carnegie Hall to perform in the US première of Howard Goodall's Eternal Light Requiem.

The Choir has raised over £35,000 for Bowel Cancer NI by providing music for their annual Christmas concert in Stormont each year. Royal photographer, Arthur Edwards, picked a performance of Danny Boy, as one of his Desert Island Discs choices, after hearing the choir singing it for the Queen at a concert in Dublin to celebrate her visit to the city.

Methodist College Belfast, or Methody as the school is affectionately known, is situated on the South side of Belfast opposite Queen's University and the city's Botanic Gardens. The College comprises a grammar school of 1810 pupils

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aged 11-18 and a Pre-school and Preparatory Department that provides an excellent educational experience for over 300 pupils.

When Methody first opened on the 18th August 1868, it was reported as being 'a most important step in the progress of education in Ireland'. In the intervening century and a half, the College has grown, expanded, adapted, innovated and flourished. Today it is a school renowned for the opportunities it provides for its pupils, the diversity of its community and the excellent all-round education that it provides. See also News page 13 below.

Dublin's Black Santa shares over €80,000 among local charities

More than €80,000 was shared among local charities when the proceeds of the bumper 2022 Dublin Black Santa Appeal were distributed last Sunday (February 19) at St Ann's Church, Dawson Street.

Representatives of the charities who benefit from the appeal gathered for a special service of Choral Mattins where prayers of gratitude for the generosity of people who donated were offered.

In all €80,826.28 was collected in the sit out during the days before Christmas. This is the largest amount ever collected in the 21 year history of the Dublin appeal and every cent donated has gone directly to the charities which include the Salvation Army, the Simon Community, Alice Leahy Trust,

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Peter McVerry Trust, Protestant Aid, St Vincent de Paul, the Samaritans, and Barnardo's among others.

Opening the service, the Vicar of St Ann's, Canon Paul Arbuthnot, noted that they gathered to give thanks for the gift of charity and for the work of those charities represented in the church. He gave thanks for the astonishing generosity of those passing the church who donated and for the corporate donors. He prayed for those in Dublin and worldwide who found themselves in need.

The preacher was the Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, the Very Revd William Morton, who, with his wife, joined the Vicar to collect during the sit out. He described the 2022 Black Santa Appeal as a magnificent success and commended the Vicar and the team at St Ann's for their commitment to the annual sit out.

Dean Morton noted that St Ann's Church was in an ideal location in close proximity to the life and culture of Dublin's city centre with many people passing the church every day. He said it's lifeblood was Anglican worship but he said he was struck by the way that those who served in the church, lay and ordained, responded to moments of divine inspiration and by their actions sought to be God's agents in what they achieved in this important setting.

Both readings [Exodus 24: 12–end and Matthew 17: 1–9], he said, referred to brushes with the divine. “The success of the Black Santa Sit Out lies in the fact that in the first instance there were those who served God here in years gone by who caught those glimpses and the potential of the divine moment, whose hearts were touched by God and



Representatives of charities which benefit from the Black Santa Sit Out in St Ann's for the Service which honours their work and gives thanks for people's generosity. They are pictured with the Vicar, Canon Paul Arbuthnot, the preacher, Dean William Morton and the caretaker Fred Deane, who plays a key role in the sit out.

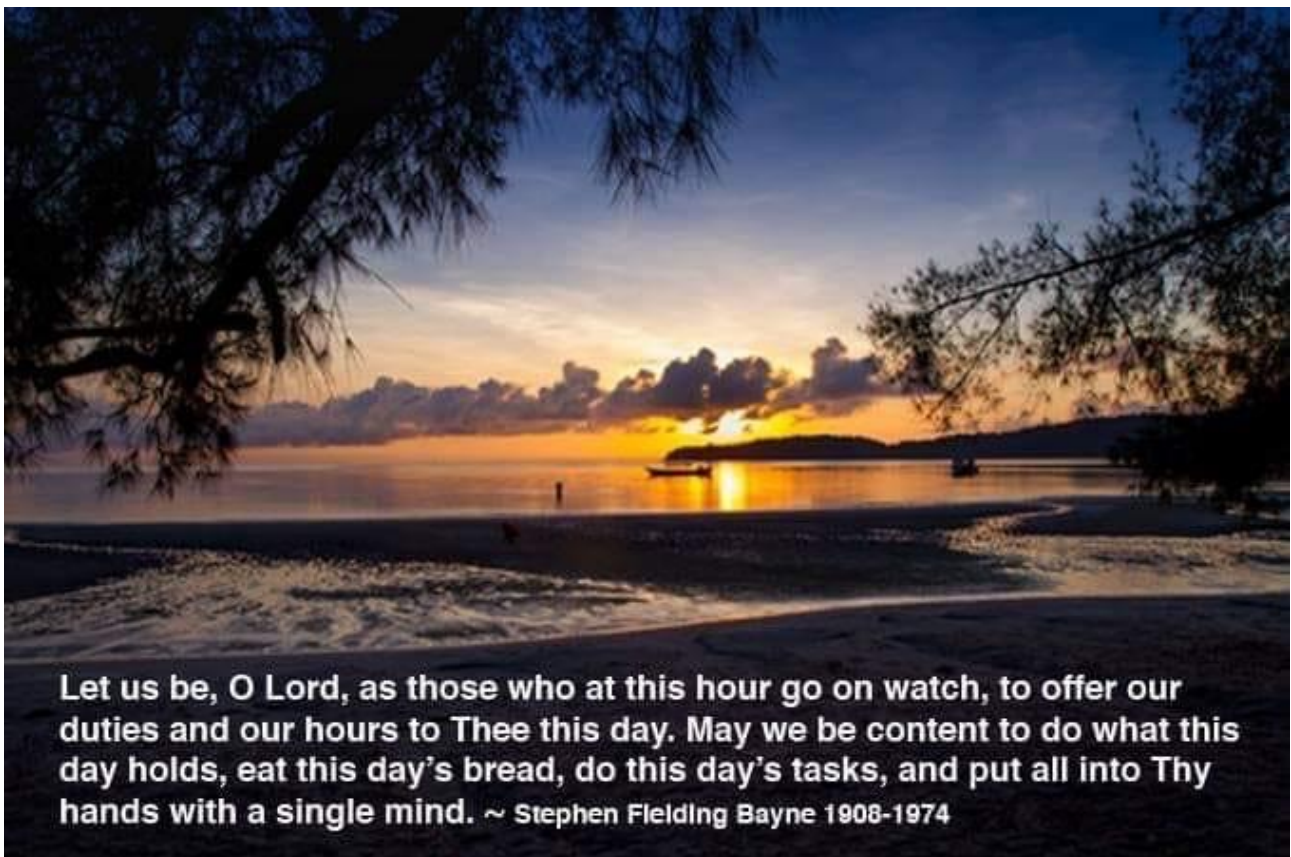
whose plans and designs were changed and for the advancement of God's people were transfigured. We encounter God in many ways – in the worship, in how thankful we are for the magnificent standard of the worship here ... We encounter God also in Holy Scripture, in prayer, in word and sacrament. We experience God too in the plight of others and in the ravages of war," he said.

Dean Morton added that those "mountain top" brushes with the divine give strength to go back down the mountain and do the hard work of faith. "Our faith is constantly challenging

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us, stretching us, calling us. Christ tells us to pick up our crosses and follow him as he goes to his own cross. We are called to love our enemies, pray for those who persecute us. We are commanded to do justice, to feed the hungry and to care for the most vulnerable. And none of this is easy. And we are asked to do it with only glimpses of the God we believe in. That is why our response to those in need is vital in the extreme. And so we celebrate and thank God for this wonderful church, the Vicar and Select Vestry and all of you who serve in this church as you carry out work in God's name," he said.

Speaking after the service on behalf of the charities which benefited, Bryan Dobson, expressed their collective gratitude to the community of St Ann's for the Black Santa Appeal. He commended the hard work and dedication of the collectors and the generosity of the donors and corporate



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doners. “Black Santa has proven to be very resilient. The Luas works couldn’t do for him and Covid couldn’t do for him. Although he is a Black Santa, he is a beacon of light in the city centre in the days before Christmas. When everybody is rushing about in the hustle and bustle of the busy season, here is someone who reminds us that in this city prosperity and wealth are side by side so often with deprivation and need. And the Black Santa, as well as raising really important funds, is also a reminder of the needs of many in this city and this community,” he said.

Being Presbyterian group affirms Women in Ministry

At their AGM on 15 February 2023, Being Presbyterian released a Statement Affirming Women in Ministry -

Being Presbyterian is a movement which seeks the welfare of the church. We name our priorities in our Road Map, the third of which reads:

“We affirm that God calls women and men to all the ministries of the church. We therefore pray and work for the unequivocal embrace of our mutual vocation in which all serve Christ with equal authority.”

In response to recent statements in the public domain from PCI ministers which diminish, damage, and undermine PCI’s agreed policy on both men and women being eligible for ministry, we make the following points:

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We fully support women who are called and ordained as ministers and elders to serve the church of our Lord Jesus Christ with the gifts and fruits that the Holy Spirit endows.

We express our dismay when the status of women, as recognized by the church, is called into question by colleagues in ministry.

We are sensitive to, and grieved by, the hurt and distress that result from a lack of collegial affirmation.

Recognising that the so-called "conscience clause" is limited in its scope and intent, we ask the courts of the Church to ensure that it is not being misunderstood or abused in practice.

Irish Methodist witness in Sri Lanka

The preacher at Lavinia Methodist Church in Sri Lanka last Sunday morning at a service with the World Council of Methodist Churches was Gillian Kingston (right) from Ireland.

Gillian is the Vice President of the World

[Church News Ireland](#)



Methodist Council.

News reports

Buckingham Palace announces music for Coronation

Gold statue of an angel blowing a trumpet, decoration on Westminster Abbey's Harrison & Harrison organ

Buckingham Palace has announced details of the music which will be performed at the Coronation of Their Majesties The King and The Queen Consort at Westminster Abbey on Saturday 6th May.

Personally selected by HM The King, the music has been chosen to showcase talent from across the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth. A range of musical styles and performers blend tradition, heritage and ceremony with new musical voices, reflecting The King's life-long love and support of music and the arts.

Andrew Nethsingha, the Abbey's Organist and Master of the Choristers, will direct the music at the service and oversee all musical arrangements.

New commissions

Among the music will be twelve new commissions, all composed for the occasion by world-renowned British composers from the worlds of sacred, classical, theatre, film

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and television music. They include a Coronation Anthem by Andrew Lloyd Webber, a Coronation March by Patrick Doyle, a commission for solo organ by Iain Farrington, and new works by Sarah Class, Nigel Hess, Paul Mealor, Tarik O'Regan, Roxanna Panufnik, Shirley Thompson, Judith Weir, Roderick Williams and Debbie Wiseman.

Choral music

The Service will be sung by The Choir of Westminster Abbey and The Choir of His Majesty's Chapel Royal, St James's Palace, together with girl choristers from the Chapel Choir of Methodist College, Belfast, and from Truro Cathedral Choir.

The Ascension Choir, a handpicked gospel choir, will also perform as part of the service, and The King's Scholars of Westminster School will proclaim the traditional 'Vivat' acclamations.

Sir John Eliot Gardiner will conduct The Monteverdi Choir & English Baroque Soloists in a pre-service programme of classical music.

Instrumental and solo performances

Sir Antonio Pappano, Music Director for the Royal Opera House, will conduct the Coronation Orchestra, made up of specially selected musicians from the orchestras of The former Prince of Wales' Patronages including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

Fanfares will be played by The State Trumpeters of the Household Cavalry and The Fanfare Trumpeters of the Royal Air Force.

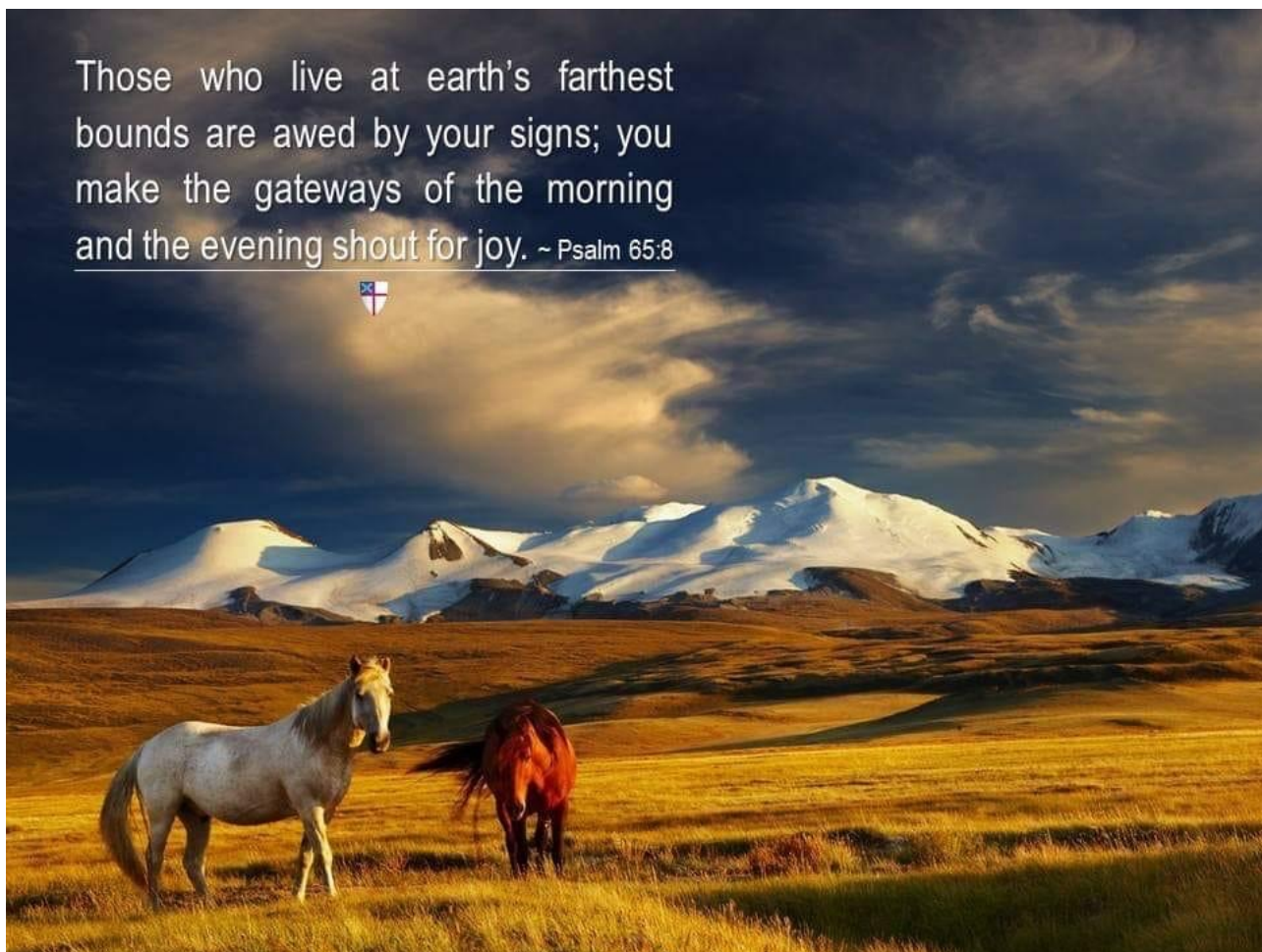
Soloists will include bass-baritone, Sir Bryn Terfel; soprano, Pretty Yende; and baritone, Roderick Williams.

The organ will be played by the Abbey's Sub-Organist, Peter Holder, and before the service by its Assistant Organist, Matthew Jorysz.

Personal connections

The Official Royal Harpist, Alis Huws, will perform as part of the Coronation Orchestra in recognition of The King's long standing and deeply held relationship and affiliation with Wales. One of the liturgical sections of the ceremony will be performed in Welsh, while a second item will include sections in three Celtic languages.

Those who live at earth's farthest bounds are awed by your signs; you make the gateways of the morning and the evening shout for joy. ~ Psalm 65:8



At the request of His Majesty, in tribute to his late father His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, Greek Orthodox music will also feature in the service performed by the Byzantine Chant Ensemble.

Blending the traditional and the modern

Music by the likes of:

William Byrd (1543 – 1623)

George Frederic Handel (1685 – 1759)

Sir Edward Elgar (1857--1934)

Sir Henry Walford Davies (1869–1941)

Sir William Walton (1902–1983)

Sir Hubert Parry (1848--1918)

has often featured in coronations over the past four centuries and will be included in the programme along with the music of one of Britain's most loved and celebrated living composers, Sir Karl Jenkins.

Looking ahead to the service, Andrew Nethsingha said:

'All coronation services are a mixture of deep-rooted tradition and contemporary innovation.

'As was the case in the four twentieth-century coronations, the choice of music reflects the cultural breadth of the age in which we live. Coronations have been taken place in Westminster Abbey since 1066.

'It has been a privilege to collaborate with His Majesty in choosing fine musicians and accessible, communicative music for this great occasion.'

Irish ‘Peacemaker’ bishop shot dead in Los Angeles

A Roman Catholic bishop who worked as a “peacemaker” during gang wars in southern California was shot and killed on Saturday.

Detectives are investigating the death of Bishop David O’Connell as a murder, according to the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department.

Authorities have not said if the bishop was targeted in the shooting. The sheriff’s department would not say how or where exactly his body was found. The gunman – or gunmen – remain at large.

O’Connell, 69, had been a priest for 45 years and was a native of Ireland, according to Angelus News, the archdiocese’s news outlet. Pope Francis had named him one of several auxiliary bishops of the archdiocese of Los Angeles – the largest in the country – in 2015.

O’Connell worked in south LA for years and focused on gang intervention, Angelus News reported. He later sought to broker peace between residents and law enforcement following the violent 1992 uprising after a jury acquitted four white LA police officers in the beating of Rodney King, a black man.

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O'Connell was found in Hacienda Heights around 1pm on Saturday with a gunshot wound. Robert Luna, LA county sheriff, wrote on Twitter: "He was a peacemaker and had a passion serving those in need while improving our community."

LA Archbishop José H Gomez initially said O'Connell "passed away unexpectedly" without mentioning violence. "It is a shock and I have no words to express my sadness," Mr Gomez said in his original statement on Saturday.

Bishop Fintan Gavin expresses prayerful sympathy on the death of Bishop David O'Connell

The news of the tragic death of Bishop David O'Connell in Los Angeles has sent shockwaves across his native Diocese of Cork and Ross.

On behalf of the people, priests and religious of the Diocese of Cork and Ross, and on my own behalf, I wish to express my sympathies and prayerful support to the O'Connell family in Cork, to Archbishop José H Gomes and the people, priests and religious of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

Since his ordination in 1979 Bishop David has served as a priest in Los Angeles but has always maintained his connection with family and friends here in Cork where has been a regular visitor.

We pray that the Lord will console Bishop David's many friends in Cork and throughout Ireland.

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We will pray for Bishop David at Mass throughout the Diocese of Cork and Ross in the coming days asking the Lord to comfort his family, his colleagues and all the bereaved.

Bishop David worked tirelessly for peace and harmony in communities; may he now rest in the peace of the Lord.

Poem for today

Running to Paradise by William Butler Yeats

As I came over Windy Gap
They threw a halfpenny into my cap,
For I am running to Paradise;
And all that I need do is to wish
And somebody puts his hand in the dish
To throw me a bit of salted fish:
And there the king is but as the beggar.

My brother Mourteen is worn out
With skelping his big brawling lout,
And I am running to Paradise;
A poor life do what he can,
And though he keep a dog and a gun,
A serving maid and a serving man:
And there the king is but as the beggar.

Poor men have grown to be rich men,

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And rich men grown to be poor again,
And I am running to Paradise;
And many a darling wit's grown dull
That tossed a bare heel when at school,
Now it has filled an old sock full:
And there the king is but as the beggar.

The wind is old and still at play
While I must hurry upon my way,
For I am running to Paradise;
Yet never have I lit on a friend
To take my fancy like the wind
That nobody can buy or bind:
And there the king is but as the beggar.

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

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