

# Church News Ireland

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**Image of the day – Tewkesbury Abbey**

## Image of the day

### Tewkesbury Abbey

**The year 2021 was big for the Abbey and for Tewkesbury. It was 900 years since the consecration of the Abbey in 1121 and 550 years since the battle of Tewkesbury in 1471.**

In a welcome from the Churchwardens on the Cathedral's web site, they say -

It's good to welcome you to Tewkesbury Abbey. The Abbey is situated at the heart of Tewkesbury and we are proud of its Anglo Catholic heritage which equips our people for their daily life through worship, community life and nurture. We invite you to visit us on a Sunday or at one of our weekday services. Here are a few things which might be helpful for you to know about us:

We're a diverse congregation of all ages and from all backgrounds. As Jesus welcomed all people, so we too welcome all people regardless of their background.

We're a place where all your senses will be fully engaged in the worship of God. You may smell incense, hear beautiful music, experience silence and stillness and see people using gestures as a way to express the inexpressible during our services.

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We're a place where ancient ritual interprets our contemporary life. You will, we hope, be struck by the beauty and holiness of the Abbey, the grace of our liturgy, the relevance of the preaching and the warm welcome.

We're a place exploring how to serve our parish and neighbourhood with acts of compassion along with expressing justice locally and globally.

We're friendly, we will make every effort to welcome you, but we will try to respect your space.

[<https://www.tewkesburyabbey.org.uk/>]

## People and places

### Mothers Union shares values of International Women's Day 2023

**The theme for International Women's Day 2023 is EmbraceEquity. We will be taking part in this global campaign to highlight the difference between equality and equity and show how, as a movement, we are embracing equity.**

Equality means that each individual is given the same resources to help them succeed. Equity understands that each person and individual has different circumstances and life situations, which means resources need to be tailored to reach an equal outcome for everyone. The International Women's Day 2023 campaign aims to highlight that equal opportunities are no longer enough and the world needs



8th March 2023

# International Women's Day

#EmbraceEquity



To start talking about, and embracing equity. Gender equality now needs to become gender equity for meaningful progress.

At Mothers' Union, equity is the core part of our values and how we run our programmes. To show our support for this worldwide campaign we are asking members and friends to send in photos of you hugging yourselves which we will use in an uplifting video we'll share on 8th March. Please send your photos to [communications@mothersunion.org](mailto:communications@mothersunion.org) by 3rd March. Give equity a huge embrace. To find out more, please visit: <https://www.mothersunion.org/news/international-womens-day-2023>



## Over 1000 students on Ash Wednesday at Queen's Catholic Chaplaincy

*Make this your*  
**BEST LENT YET**

**PRAYER** 

**ALMS GIVING** 

  **#PRAY  
#FAST  
#GIVE**



Over 1000 students committed to make this Lent their best yet! What an amazing turn out for Ash Wednesday. Huge thanks were expressed to Bishop Donal McKeown of Derry for joining in.

**Some ideas...**

**Join a Bible Study this Lent.  
Scan the QR code overleaf!**

**Attend daily Mass at the Chaplaincy. Mass times:  
1.05pm on Mon/Wed/Fri and 5.15pm on Tues/Thurs**

**Fast from Social Media**

**Join the Trócaire Society at QUB, or Order of Malta QUB**

**Attend our weekly Holy Hour, 'Awaken,' on a Wednesday evening**

*For more information on all of this and more of what happens at Chaplaincy, email us at [catholicchaplaincy@qub.ac.uk](mailto:catholicchaplaincy@qub.ac.uk)*

**#PRAY #FAST #GIVE**

*Make this your*  
**BEST LENT YET**



**Inaugural cross-community conference  
on peace education and conflict management**

**Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

**9:30am - 7:00pm**

**Newforge Sports Complex, 18b Newforge Lane, Belfast**

# **Understanding Doesn't Mean Agreeing: Youth Perspectives**

Featuring a keynote address by comedian and television personality

**Patrick Kielty**

and a live performance by

**Limestone United Cross Community Performers**

To register to attend in-person,  
please email:  
**[PSIConference@mail.com](mailto:PSIConference@mail.com)**



To participate  
via Zoom,  
please scan  
this code



Presented with the generous support of:



Yale **MACMILLAN CENTER**  
*Program on Peace and Development*



An Roinn Gnóthai Eachtracha  
Department of Foreign Affairs





## **Ministers meet leading Irish NGOs**

Tánaiste Micheal Martin TD and Minister Sean Fleming TD recently met with 14 leading Irish NGOs to discuss how Ireland can continue to play a leading role in changing lives around the world.

## **World Thinking Day - a rector reflects**

The Reverend Arlene Moore noted - “Great fun on World Thinking Day..... Making chocolate lollies, bead/charm bracelets and foam pictures with the Rainbows..... Playing WAGGS flag symbol games, decorating planters and planting cress/parsley/chive seeds with the Brownies.....





....Then on to the Guides & Rangers who were enamel painting glass pebbles to gift to a fellow guide who is ill, playing wink murder (v dramatically), port/starboard games and making pancakes and hot chocolate to finish.

.....Total respect to all leaders overseeing so many girls on a weekly basis. Well done to all. Praying for the regional WAGGS Thinking Day event in 1st Larne Presbyterian church on Fri night and for all our Brownies heading to Lorne for a residential weekend on Saturday. Have fun everyone and may the leaders sleep well hehe.

## **International Justice Ministry Summer Placements**

**Summer Placement applications are OPEN!**

Apply now to join the IJM team, contribute to the mission and gain valuable experience for the future.

Apply now or send this opportunity to a friend...



Full-time and part-time placements are available with our:  
🖥️ Marketing and Public Engagement team: office-based/  
hybrid in London

🙏 Church Partnerships team in Northern Ireland: office-  
based/hybrid in Belfast

🙏 Church Partnerships team in England: office-based/  
hybrid in London or remote home working

🙏 Church Partnerships team in Scotland: office-based/  
hybrid in Edinburgh

[IJMUK.org/summer-placements](https://IJMUK.org/summer-placements)

## News reports

### One year on in Ukraine, Christian Aid thanks British people for their support

**One year on from the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the international development agency Christian Aid is thanking the British people for ensuring the response in Ukraine “can go beyond the basics of food and shelter.”**

The charity, a member of the Disasters Emergency committee (DEC), is also inviting churches from across Britain and Ireland to join in an act of witness to pray for Ukraine, either in Sunday worship or in their community on either Friday 24 or Sunday 26 February.

According to the international development agency, there are 17.7 million Ukrainians in need of aid and still more than 13 million people unable to return to their homes one year on from the invasion.

However, thanks to the funds raised by the Disaster Emergency Committee Appeal, Christian Aid has already been able to deliver £10m of emergency assistance to over 770,000 people affected by the war.

Working through local partners, the charity says money donated by people across the United Kingdom has helped provide shelter and distribute lorry loads of food as well as life-saving medical equipment and hygiene kits for those

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forced to flee their homes as well as those still close to the frontline where the fighting is relentless.

Patrick Watt, Chief Executive of Christian Aid, said: “In the first phase of our response, meeting people’s most basic needs understandably dominated our work in Ukraine. Revisiting the country earlier this month, I could see how our programme has evolved.



The poster features a purple-to-pink gradient background. At the top, silhouettes of three soldiers in a field are overlaid with white musical notes and symbols. A vertical purple bar on the right side contains the text 'sand.es.org.uk'.

# Fundraising Concert for Sandes

Featuring the Northern Ireland Military Wives Choir  
and the Band of the Royal Irish Regiment

**FRIDAY 21 APRIL at 7.30pm**  
**in HOLYWOOD BAPTIST CHURCH**

Come along to hear about the work of Sandes Soldiers' Centres - a Christian mission embedded within the military community.

To register for the event, go to [eventbrite.co.uk](https://eventbrite.co.uk) and search for Sandes or scan this QR code.



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“Our partners are now providing children a place to play and form new friendships, and giving parents an active role in designing and running projects.

“It is thanks to the solidarity and generosity of the British public, our support for Ukrainian people can go beyond the basics of food and shelter.”

Saleh Saeed, CEO of the Disasters Emergency committee (DEC), added: “I’ve just returned from Odesa in Ukraine



"Christ says that He is 'humble and meek' and we believe Him; not noticing that, if He were merely a man, humility and meekness are the very last characteristics we could attribute to some of His sayings"

C.S. Lewis - Mere Christianity

#KenDennison

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where I saw what this incredible support has meant to people who have lost so much.

“Whether displaced inside Ukraine or those who have fled to other countries, the DEC funds are meeting people’s basic needs – food, medicine, cash, as well as helping children continue their education, providing mental health support and keeping vulnerable people safe.

“These funds have meant that we’ve been able to respond at every stage of the crisis and will continue to do so over the next two years as new challenges arise and needs continue to change. It’s making a huge difference to people who are going through the worst time of their life. Thank you.”

## Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books



### God at work in Rejuvenation

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Down & Dromore - God at work in Rejuvenation, with Denise Wilson. Link to U Tube at - [\[https://www.downanddromore.org/news/2023/02/god-at-work-in-rejuvenation-with-denise-wilson\]](https://www.downanddromore.org/news/2023/02/god-at-work-in-rejuvenation-with-denise-wilson)



## **Sunday prayer with Bishop Michael Burrows**

The Rt Revd Michael Burrows joins TLK Diocesan Reader and Communications Officer, Stephen Fletcher for Sunday Prayer this week - the first Sunday in Lent. Broadcast earlier on Sunday morning on Clare FM, you can listen to it by clicking the link below:-

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<https://www.mixcloud.com/TLKCOMMS/sunday-prayer-sunday-26th-february-2023/>

You can find this and all of Stephen's podcasts on the [tlk.ie](https://www.tlk.ie) website under the News and Podcasts tab

<https://www.tlk.ie/podcasts/>

## **Perfect Pitch singing 'Every Time I Feel The Spirit'**

Here's a taster of the wonderful youth choir, Perfect Pitch singing 'Every Time I Feel The Spirit' in the beautiful setting of Chatsworth House. Hear the whole song on Sunday 19 Feb 2023 1.15pm BBC One and afterwards on BBC iPlayer

[<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m001jf9r/songs-of-praise-lent-in-lincolnshire>]

## **The Unfinished Work of Peace - Archbishop Eamon Martin**

As we enter into Lent 2023, Archbishop Eamon Martin reflects that we are still dealing with what he calls a fragile peace process 25 years after the Good Friday Agreement.

"Words ... statements ... particularly on social media can inflame hatred, sectarianism, bigotry ... I think during Lent we should place a guard over our social media use" - Archbishop Eamon Martin reflecting on the Unfinished Work of Peace

Full interview [youtu.be/yiMFkYo-fs8](https://youtu.be/yiMFkYo-fs8)



## Perspective

### Who watches over our city? - by Colin Neill

**In the last number of months, I've returned to working in a Belfast office for a few days each week, and am now parking at the outer edges of the city's Titanic Quarter.**

That has meant regular glimpses of what are arguably Belfast's greatest icons: Samson and Goliath, the two gantry cranes that dominate large swathes of the city's skyline and can be seen from miles around. The cranes generally inspire me, reminding me that I can only be in one place: a city that speaks to me of many good memories and milestones, alongside friends and family.

But over the last number of weeks, some personal thoughts have started to crowd in around the cranes, with two dominant questions recurring. How did a city steeped in so much evangelical faith and Biblicism come to give these icons the names of two of scripture's most inglorious figures? And was there an almost prophetic symbolism in them starting to watch over the city just as more than two decades of horrific violence started to unfold?

I realise, of course, that it could not have been anticipated how deeply the names of both cranes would become baked into the city's vernacular. I am sure that when they were first used, they were almost certainly a witty nod to their size and strength. But it now seems to me that just as the cranes cast

a literal shadow at certain times each day, so in their names, they also represent Belfast's dreadful shadow side.

Incredibly, Goliath - the first and slightly smaller crane (315-ft) - was constructed in 1969, the year the Troubles started, with Samson (348-ft) following on in 1974 (source: Wikipedia). They went on to loom over a city that saw over 1,500 deaths during the Troubles, a figure that we today lament, but that would have prompted little to no sorrow or sadness for their Biblical namesakes.

Goliath - the champion from Gath - only appears in one chapter of the Bible (1 Samuel 17), but made a very memorable name for himself. He was armour-clad, stood at nine-feet-nine-inches tall, and happily volunteered to play for the Philistines in a one-man-versus-one-man settling of their conflict with the Israelites. His goading went on - morning and evening - for forty days, before a youthful David took him out with only a catapult and five smooth stones. Goliath's pride literally went before a fall, as it turned out that God's answer to a nine-ft Philistine was not a ten-ft Israelite.

Samson's story plays out over Judges 13 to 16, the tale of the man whose long hair was the secret-sauce of the strength given to him by God. He's as violent a figure as any in the Bible, a brutal man who seems to enjoy the capacity for cruelty his outsized strength affords him. A penchant for revenge is a dispiriting part of his makeup, and a weakness for women fills out his moral portrait. He ends up blind and humiliated, but as stubble turns to hair on his previously shaven head, his last prayer to God is for the fortitude to carry out a suicide attack that kills three thousand Philistines

in one act. The lesson of Samson seems to be that even the greatest spiritual gifts are worth little if not submitted to God.

Together, Samson and Goliath are the proverbial strongmen. They strut and swagger, and throw their weight about. They know that they can intimidate and terrorise as much through their personal myth as through actual presence and deeds done. In the words of Mark Heard's song *How to Grow Up Big and Strong* (made famous by Rich Mullins), they are 'fit and dominant', they don't bow to circumstance, and they don't have the words that mean love.

And as the gantry cranes watched over the city during the Troubles - and right up to this day - I wonder how many little-Samsons and little-Goliaths they both saw and still see. Men who rule by fear and dish out capricious violence, ostensibly because of ideology or to defend their own community, but mainly - honestly - because they simply enjoy cruelty and power.

As I've reflected on the destructive nature of Samson and Goliath, I've got to thinking about whether Christians in the city could start to have conversations about the Biblical figures we'd want to watch over their city, if we had a choice. I recognise that it would be next to impossible to ever think the cranes could be renamed, so widely accepted have their names become, but that doesn't mean that as Jesus followers we should ignore the spur to prayerful imagination that such discussions could be.

I have two starters for ten. The first is David and Jonathan, partly because it was David who brought Goliath down, and

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also because David and Jonathan's friendship was so intense and strong that it endured despite the enmity between the House of Saul and David's destiny to kingship. Love that transcends boundaries is surely something that Belfast could do with more of.

My second suggestion is Ezra and Nehemiah, two great leaders of post-exilic leadership in Israel who worked together, Ezra as teacher and Nehemiah as builder. Post-Troubles, Belfast could experience genuine spiritual renewal through Ezra's hunger for confession and repentance, and Nehemiah could help to rebuild its social fabric and heal the scars of deprivation.

Maybe these are foolish thoughts, but maybe not. I hope they might inspire some holy debate and discussion among God's people and their leaders. Because if I could choose the people who would watch over Belfast, Samson and Goliath would make it nowhere near my list.

*Colin Neill works in local economic development, and is a PCI accredited preacher and spiritual director.*

## Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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# Church News Ireland

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