



**Image of the day -
Parish Church of St Thomas
Rathlin Island**



Bangor Parish Church gives away 4,200 Gospels

Bangor Parish Church is one of the parishes to have taken part in the Diocese of Down and Dromore's Gospel Giveaway project. Over 60,000 free, pocket-sized copies of the Gospel of John were ordered before Christmas and are still being distributed across Down and Dromore.

Jonny Tate, BPC's Mission and Operations Co-Ordinator, said: "A big thank you to the diocese and the Pocket Testament League for supplying us with copies of John's Gospel to go out to every one of the 4200 homes in our parish.

"We packaged the Gospel together with a card of hope for every home. This resource helped mobilise over 50 our Church family to 'go' and take the love of Jesus to our neighbours. We pray that the Lord will continue to equip us for mission."

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#Connect4Creation project for C of I in Lent 2021

The Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal for World Aid and Development is encouraging parishes across the island to take part in its #Connect4Creation project for Lent 2021. This initiative helps members of the Church to connect with God, who is in our midst, and with their surroundings and the natural world.

Connect4Creation provides activities for taking time to learn about the wonder of bees, doing simple actions to support them, and getting involved in supporting communities and bees across the world.**



Christian Aid, a Bishops' Appeal partner agency, is working in communities in Zimbabwe where bee-hives form a crucial part of complex, flourishing ecosystem that contains bees, crops, woodlands and people – each needing to play their part for the flourishing of the whole. The resource has also been put together with help from Eco-Congregation Ireland and Muddy Church.

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Locally, parishioners can plant flowers to increase the number of habitats for pollinators, make bee hotels, and explore their local areas, using specially designed Muddy Bee Trail prompt cards full of interesting facts and Bible verses to help you wander and wonder this Lent.

Actions that can help to focus on global issues include fundraising (it costs around €67 to fund the building of a bee-hive in Zimbabwe), prayer, and creating crafts, a bee trail, or honeycomb crunchie bars, which can help as a fundraiser too. Donations can be saved up and sent in after the end of Lent – see

www.bishopsappeal.ireland.anglican.org/give for options for bank details and how to increase the value of what you give through Gift Aid or charitable tax relief.

Have a great time exploring God’s creation over these next few weeks as spring starts and the days get longer. And feel free to share how you’re getting on with the hashtag #Connect4Creation.

Day of Prayer for Young People and Youth Ministry

The Church of Ireland Youth Department is encouraging parishes across the island to set aside Sunday 14 February to pray for young people and everyone who serves them through youth ministry. The last Sunday before Lent is designated by the House of Bishops as a Day of Prayer for Young People and Youth Ministry.

National Youth Officer Simon Henry says: “The CIYD Day of Prayer has gone from strength to strength over the past few
churchnewsireland@gmail.com

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years with widespread engagement across the island. Now more than ever, we need to continue to pray for our young people and engage them in prayer to foster and encourage a real and life-long relationship with God our Father. God is our ever-present hope in trouble and let us use the Day of



Prayer to remind our young people of that this year.”

A book published by CIYD for this day in 2019 is available with lots of ideas of how to pray – just email admin@ciyd.org to get a copy; the book is also available in a PDF format.

C of E dioceses might see a reduction in paid clergy, leaked document reveals

There are reports that the Church of England dioceses are considering reducing the numbers of paid clergy by 10 to 20 per cent.

A leaked document, seen by The Sunday Times, has revealed that most dioceses intend to "prune" staff numbers as it is feared a fifth of worshippers might not return to in-person services once the coronavirus pandemic is over.

But for Revd Alderton-Ford, vicar of Christ Church Moreton Hall and a Member of the General Synod, cuts in staff numbers are not a consequence of the coronavirus crisis. Speaking to Premier he said the pandemic has only "brought long-term problems into sharp focus".

"The issue about dropping attendance and whether they're going to watch on television is one thing, clergy cuts and everything else is another one, although the two are obviously linked," he said.

Revd Jonathan explained cuts will not be made on a national basis as each diocese gets to decide on the number of clergy they hire.

"Some dioceses are fantastically wealthy, so the cuts will be less in those areas. Those dioceses, which are less wealthy, will have seen more cuts.

"For example, Birmingham has already cut 25 per cent of posts. Chelmsford has already taken a huge cut, and it's going to cut further, it varies from diocese to diocese."



After the first national lockdown, research suggested there were between 100,000 and 200,000 people who estimated they may not return to in-person services. However, a Church of England spokesperson told Premier this number is expected to be offset by new worshipers who have started attending online services.

The report suggests a way to reduce financial costs would be by recruiting more self-sustained ministers (SMS) which would join the already 2,870 existent ones, 7,370 retired clergy who continue to officiate and 7,830 lay readers.

Revd Jonathan said it's a recruitment issue.

"We've under-recruited full-time clergy, and for decades, and we've been filling them already with lots of self-supporting ministers.

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"Just taking Suffolk as a whole, we have 100 full-time clergy, we have nearly 150 SMS' house for duty and other posts. And we've got 437 buildings. Now we don't need 437 buildings. I'm not saying we should close all of them. But certainly, there's an argument for saying, well how many outlets do we actually need with a workforce of that size?" Revd Jonathan said.

The document also revealed that 12,000 parishes are under review with at least 5,000 churches that might see its financial support cut as it questions their viability.

The Church of England currently has a network of 16,000 churches and 42 cathedrals.

A church of England spokesperson told Premier News: "The findings, based on research during the first lockdown last year, are incomplete in the context of a developing situation.

"The Church of England will continue to assess ongoing research and analysis to understand how the pandemic may shape the church in the future."

Pope establishes World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly

Pope Francis has announced the institution of World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, which will take place each year on the fourth Sunday in July, close to the feast of Sts Joachim and Anne, the grandparents of Jesus.

Recalling the upcoming feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple - when the elderly Simeon and Anna encountered the child Jesus and recognised Him as the Messiah - Pope Francis said: "the Holy Spirit even today

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stirs up thoughts and words of wisdom in the elderly." The voice of the elderly "is precious because it sings the praises of God and preserves the roots of the peoples."

"The elderly remind us that old age is a gift and that grandparents are the link between the different generation, to pass on to the young the experience of life."

The Holy Father said he instituted the World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly because "grandparents are often forgotten, and we forget this wealth of preserving roots and passing on" what the elderly have received.

He emphasised the importance of grandparents and grandchildren getting to know one another, because "as the prophet Joel says, grandparents seeing their grandchildren dream," while "young people, drawing strength from their grandparents, will go forward and prophesy."

In a press release following the announcement, Cardinal Kevin Farrell, Prefect of the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, the establishment of the Day "is the first fruits of the Amoris Laetitia Family Year, a gift to the whole Church that is destined to continue into the future."

He said: "The pastoral care of the elderly is a priority that can no longer be postponed by any Christian community. In the encyclical Fratelli tutti, the Holy Father reminds us that no one is saved alone. With this in mind, we must treasure the spiritual and human wealth that has been handed down from generation to generation."

Pope Francis is expected to celebrate the first World Day by presiding at Mass on the evening of Sunday, 25 July, in St



Peter's - subject to covid safety measures in place at the time. A further announcement will be made nearer the time.

Vittorio Scelzo is involved with the pastoral care of the elderly within the Dicastery for Laity, Family and Life, He notes that the celebration of the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly is connected to the Days established by Pope Francis for the Word of God and for the Poor. In an interview with Vatican News, Scelzo said the poor, the Bible and the elderly" are three priorities of Pope Francis' pontificate, priorities which are destined to mark the future of the Church.

It is necessary to bridge the gap between the elderly and younger generations, Scelzo said, adding, "The elderly are not saved by themselves. Unfortunately, we have seen during the pandemic how many elderly were not saved."

He said that Pope Francis wants to remind us that similarly, young people, adults and our society cannot save

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themselves without the elderly, said Scelzo. He noted that intergenerational dialogue is essential.

"In order to come out of the crisis better and not worse, every society needs to come to terms with its roots and develop a new synthesis of its values, starting also from dialogue with the elderly."

Scelzo continued, "The opposite of the culture of discarding is precisely pastoral care for the elderly: putting the elderly at the centre of the life of our communities every day. Not only in emergencies, not only when it is too late to realise this."

The elderly "are trees that always bear fruit and people who continue to dream." So young people must be "brought into dialogue with the dreams of the elderly." Scelzo recalls that this is a message often repeated by Pope Francis. "The dreams of the elderly have built our society; for example, I am thinking of Europe, of a world without war anymore." The encyclical *Tutti fratelli* is full of "this dream of a world without war." It is the dream that "our elders, our grandparents had after the Second World War."

He concluded: "Perhaps, we need to enter into dialogue with these dreams, in order, to understand what the dreams for the future of our society should be."

Link - *Fratelli Tutti* - www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html

When Napoleon's death mask was discovered in Limerick village

Donal O'Regan in the Limerick Leader tells of a creative and historical writing competition in Castleconnell which has unveiled a remarkable story connecting the village to Napoleon's death mask.

A death mask is a likeness of a person's face after their death, usually made by taking a cast or impression from the corpse

Castleconnell is steeped in history and heritage but when organisers asked for historical stories and tales of hidden history in a story competition no one could have foreseen such an amazing true story to be told.

Napoleon's Death Mask by Barbara Hartigan

Annie Hartigan, was a small fiery, red-haired, dressmaker who lived all her life in Railway Cottage, now refurbished and renamed Sloe Berry Cottage, next to the Garda station in Castleconnell.

One day in the 1950s Edward Hartigan, her nephew, was working in the house accompanied by his youngest son Leslie.

Bored and with childish curiosity Leslie climbed the stairs onto the small landing and noticed a large antique leather trunk pushed beneath the eaves. On lifting the lid he felt the hairs stand up on the back of his neck as a ghostly white decapitated, disembodied head peered out from the darkness.

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Dropping the lid, he fled down the stairs and out into the sunlight.

Having recovered from the shock, Leslie persuaded his Dad to come with him to investigate further. They discovered that “the head” was accompanied by a newspaper cutting, which stated in bold print, “Napoleon's death mask missing.” and a hand written letter, which stated that Napoleon's death mask had been handed to Major Thomas Gilley on a ship in the Mediterranean in 1821, the year that Napoleon died.

Major Gilley was a friend of the Hartigans and when he died his wife gave the death mask to Patrick Hartigan, Edward's father and Leslie’s grandfather.

Annie, now in poor health moved in to Ingoldsby, to live with Edward and his wife Edith.

Canon James Pennefather, the Church of Ireland Rector of All Saints Church, Castleconnell, was a regular caller to Ingoldsby and on one of these visits he was shown Napoleon’s death mask and its accompanying certification of authenticity. Being both amazed and intrigued he suggested that



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Judge Gamble, who had recently retired to live in Ballinacourty House, might be asked for an opinion as to who could be interested in appraising this unique find.

Judge Gamble, made contact with a Baron de Brie in London who expressed interest in the information.

The mask and the handwritten letter were wrapped and transported to London by Judge Gamble.

A few weeks passed and the Judge returned, without the mask and the handwritten letter but with an offer of 24 guineas, which was to be divided between Annie, Edith and Edward. Edward did not want to sell but was overruled by the two ladies and the 24 Guineas were duly paid, divided three ways and the deal done.

Not long afterwards Castleconnell village was invaded by a number of French reporters and media officials who all wanted to investigate the whereabouts of Napoleon's death mask that, having been bought in a London auction, had just been installed in pride of place in the Musee de Armee, at the Invalides in Paris.

Annie Hartigan died on the 10th of February 1961.

In July 1971, Leslie and his new wife Barbara, visited Paris and found the mask in close proximity to Napoleons Tomb and his beloved horse, not hiding in a dusty, leather trunk, but proudly displayed in a glass cabinet on rich red velvet, the same face that had once so terrified a small boy, now bearing the inscription.

“Napoleon's Death Mask, recovered in a small cottage in the south of Ireland.”

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Major Thomas Gilley, lived out his days in Castleconnell, in Rock Lodge, and was laid to rest in an elaborate grave at the rear of All Saints Church, marked by a wonderfully crafted monument, which he created for himself, finished, except for the date of his death,

(Easter Day 1869 aged 63.) which was carved and completed by his son, also Thomas Gilley.

Napoleon's Death Mask, has now been relocated to the Maison Bonaparte, in Ajaccio, in Corsica.

C'est la vie.

Barbara Hartigan

Courtesy the Limerick Leader, 01.02.2021

More at -

[[] <https://www.limerickleader.ie/news/home/606162/when-napoleons-death-mask-was-discovered-in-limerick-village.html>]

Broadcasts, resources and webinars

Join USPG & SPCK Publishing - "this Bray Day as we release a fascinating digital archive, a freely available online exhibition of sources and letters from the time of the Society's foundation". Keynote speaker Bishop Rowan Williams. 15 Feb, 7.30pm. Register at <https://bit.ly/3oGcQ5N>

Irish Methodist World Development & Relief Latest Newsletter - You can view it here: <https://mailchi.mp/2647dbfa1316/let-us-introduce-you-to-7395689> If you'd like to receive future newsletters, sign up here: <http://eepurl.com/dj0Blz>

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Evening Prayer in Irish - Urnaí na Nóna – Evening Prayer (in Irish): Seirbhís Zoom sheachtainiúil Urnaí na Nóna ag Séiplíneacht Eaglais na hÉireann Choláiste na Tríonóide, Dé Céadaoin ag a 6 i.n. le linn an téarma. Cuir do sheoladh ríomphoist isteach thíos chun eolas... [[]] http://www.limerick.anglican.org/urnai-na-nona-evening-prayer-in-irish/?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter]

Wilderness Journey - Lent Bible Study and Discussion from Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, online via Zoom. 22 February, 1 March, 8 March, 15 March, and 22 March 8.00 - 9.00 pm. “We are planning for an online Bible study and discussion for Lent this year around the theme ‘Wilderness Journey’. Each week will include reflection and discussion on a psalm, alongside an excerpt from the Sayings of the Desert Fathers and Mothers. These sessions all take place online via Zoom, email Abigail (abigail@christchurch.ie) to register to receive the link.

Unity, theology and women - SCM Press. “This important book draws together how we learn both from other churches and from the voices of women.” says Paular Gooder For the Good of the Church: Unity, Theology and Women by [@womeninchurch](https://twitter.com/womeninchurch). Pre-order now [<http://bit.ly/WOMEN21>]

The Bible for Today with John Stott - Billy Graham once referred to John Stott as “the most respected clergyman in the world.” In 2005, Time Magazine ranked him among the 100 most influential people in the world.

Today Stott’s incredible theological and practical insights are available to you in The Bible for Today with John Stott.

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Giving you a fresh, clear, and true vision of the authentic Jesus, The Bible for Today balances high theology with practical Christian living in a way that compels every listener to soak in and live out the truth of God's Word.

Link to podcasts at -

[\[\[\] https://www.premierchristianradio.com/Shows/Sunday/The-Bible-for-Today-with-John-Stott?](https://www.premierchristianradio.com/Shows/Sunday/The-Bible-for-Today-with-John-Stott?)

Pointers for prayer

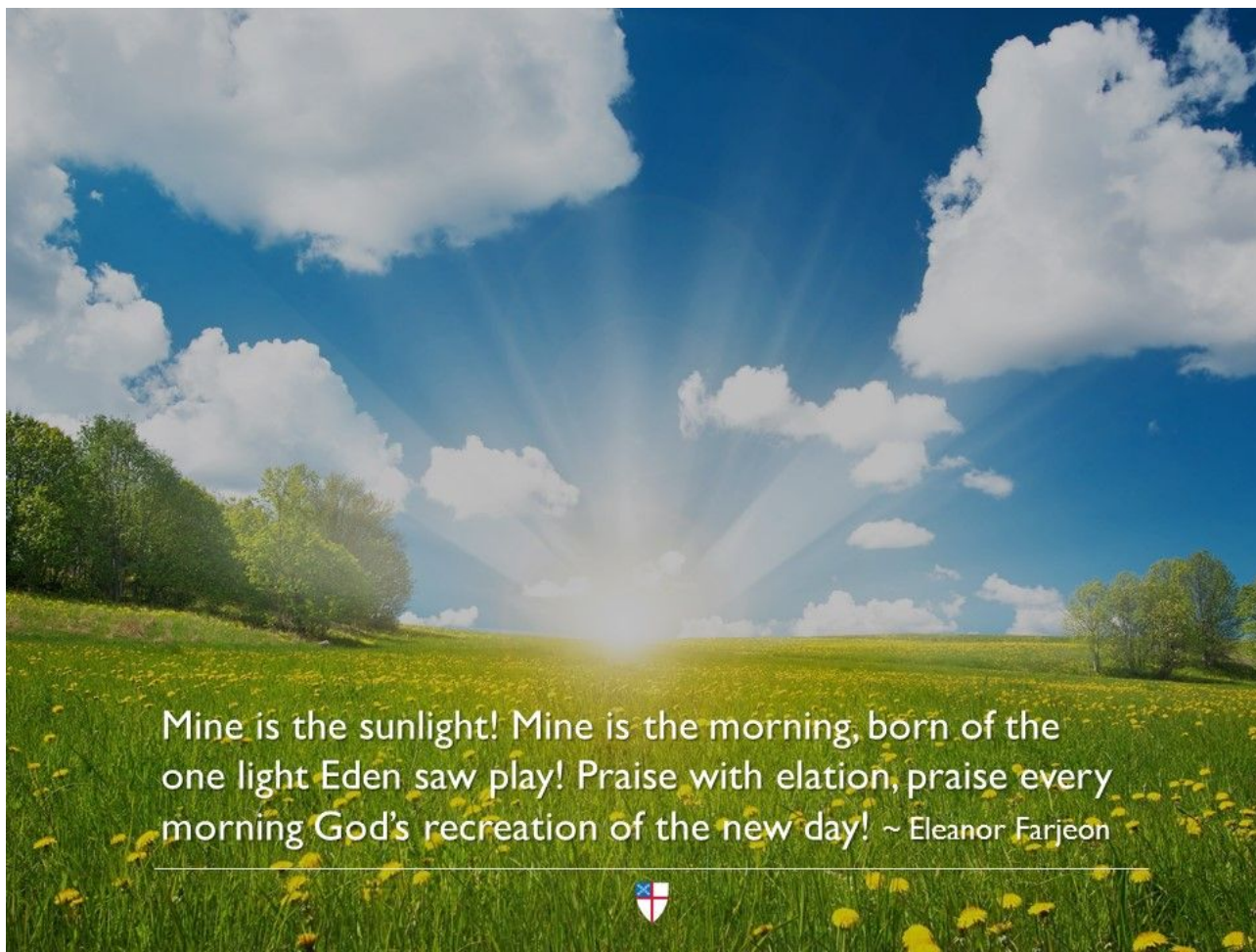
Pray that the right person will be appointed to lead Church Army in the next chapter. Pray for wisdom for the Board members as they meet to decide who will be appointed.

We think today of families who are struggling to cope with the ongoing restrictions to normal life, especially those who live in small homes with no outside space. We pray for an abundance of tolerance to help ease their less than ideal circumstances.

Today we give thanks for young climate activists. A UN survey shows that demand for green business and jobs is particularly high among young people, who have been a driving force behind getting the issue onto the political agenda.

Pray for the Moderator as he seeks to give a lead to the Church at the start of 2021, and for plans being put in place for the General Assembly later this year and also as he seeks to provide encouragement and pastoral care for PCI's ministers.

We remember with thanks the numerous Mothers' Union members who, over the years, have used their God-given



gifts to change the world. We pray that, in our day, we'll also be willing to use our gifts to help transform lives and communities

Today we pray for Mozambique. A cholera outbreak combined with a growing humanitarian crisis after fighting in a northern province displaced more than 500,000 people last year has led to the UN calling for help in the region.

Today we give thanks for those raising awareness of leprosy around the world. It's World Leprosy Day next week, when advocates challenge myths and spread awareness about leprosy, which is totally curable, globally.

We pray today for the church across the world, especially in places where they are experiencing hardship and

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persecution. We stand together with our sisters and brothers and pray for God to bring relief from their circumstances.

Lord Jesus, you prayed that we would all be united together so the world would believe and experience your love. Help us to put aside that which keeps us apart and work together to share your love through our actions and our lives.

Speaking to the Soul

It is God who enables us, along with you, to stand firm for Christ. He has commissioned us, and he has identified us as his own by placing the Holy Spirit in our hearts as the first instalment that guarantees everything he has promised us.

2 Corinthians 1:21-22 NLT

I wonder what you really make of your Christian brothers and sisters. Honestly. Before you tell me, let me suggest that you find them mixed. You feel incredibly close to some of them and know that you could share anything with them. And then there are others who you find hard work. You just don't easily see eye to eye with them. Their approach to life and the Lord is so different from yours. That was certainly Paul's experience! The Corinthian Christians were very mixed. Some were his close friends and others were doing everything they could to bring him down.

What I love about these verses today is that Paul addresses the whole church and celebrates the way in which God has blessed them – all of them. He is so gracious with his accusers and with those who are trying to obstruct his ministry. He wants to remind them all that they are standing firm in Christ and that they can all be sure of God's blessings in the future.

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Paul speaks of the blessing of the Holy Spirit that is at work in every single believer. He tells them that the Holy Spirit is like a seal of ownership upon them. Because they have received the Spirit they can be absolutely sure that they belong to God. But more. He tells them that the Holy Spirit is like a deposit or down-payment which God has made which makes it absolutely certain that we will receive all of God's future blessings.

It's easy to understand that Paul would say all those things about the people that he really likes in Corinth. But he was affirming that they were God's true words about every single Christian, including those who were giving him such a hard time. That's grace, and I find that deeply moving.

QUESTION

How will you pray today for those Christians with whom you find it hardest to relate?

PRAYER

Thank you, loving Lord, that you are so generous and loving to every Christian, whether I get on well with them or not.
Amen.



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